

Nebraska Sign Language Interpreter Review Board Meeting

Approved by board June 4th, 2021

February 26, 2021; 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Held via Zoom

A. Welcome

The meeting of the Nebraska Interpreter Review Board (IRB) was called to order at 1:00 pm by Mr. Thomas Beyer, Acting Chairperson, via Zoom.

B. Notice of Open Meeting

Acting Chair, Mr. Thomas Beyer, announced the notice of this meeting was duly given, posted, published and tendered in the Omaha World Herald on February 19, 2021, in compliance with the Open Meetings Act and all Board members received notice simultaneously by e-mail. Subsequently, Governor Pete Ricketts' Executive Order No. 21-02, Corona Virus – Continued Limited Waiver of Public Meeting Requirements, dated January 11, 2021, waives certain requirements of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. To wit, all governing bodies may meet by videoconference or by telephone conferencing or by conferencing by other electronic communication so long as there is made available at such meeting access to members of the public and to members of the media. This waiver shall apply to all public governing body meetings that occur from January 31, 2021, to April 30, 2021. Due to the Governor's Executive Order, this meeting is being held virtually through Zoom. The agenda has been kept current and is available at the Commission's office and on their website.

The materials generally used by the Board for this meeting today are located on the Commission's website and are available to the general public for the purpose of this meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act {Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1412 (8)} and Executive Order No. 21-02.

C. Roll Call

For the record, Board Members Mr. Thomas Beyer, Ms. Vonda Apking, Mr. Richard McCowin, Ms. Jessica Nickels, Mrs. Tami Richardson-Nelson and Mr. John Wyvill, Executive Director, were present. Ms. Peggy Williams and Ms. Nancy Flearl were absent for roll call.

Also present were NCDHH staff Ms. Sharon Sinkler, Interpreter Program Coordinator; Abby Giambattista, Advocacy Specialist; and Traci Johns, Administrative Assistant.

Interpreters for the meeting were Ms. Margie Propp and Ms. Amber Tucker. Margaret Heaney of ERI was present to provide CART services.

There were no visitors at the meeting.

D. Review of Agenda

Mr. Wyvill explained that the pink items were action items and then read the agenda.

E. Acceptance of Agenda

Board Member, Mr. McCowin, moved to accept the agenda as written. Board Member, Ms.

Apking seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Mr. Beyer, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson, Ms. Nickels, Mr. Wyvill, Mr. McCowin and Ms. Apking all voting aye. Ms. Williams and Ms. Flearl were absent.

F. Acceptance of Minutes

Board Member, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson, requested that her name be made consistent throughout the minutes. Mrs. Richardson-Nelson made a motion to adopt the December 4th, 2020, minutes as corrected and Mr. Beyer seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Apking, Mr. Beyer, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson, Ms. Nickels, Mr. Wyvill all voting aye. Mr. McCowin abstained. Ms. Williams and Ms. Flearl were absent.

G. Chairperson of the Board's Report

No report given.

H. Public Comments

None.

I. Executive Director Report – presented by Mr. John Wyvill

a. Agency updates

- Mr. Wyvill shared that the agency budget has been approved and that the agency will next submit a letter to the legislature. The budget includes base level funding and provisions to keep carryover money that was not spent and it is to be used for interpreter-related programs.
- Mr. Wyvill noted that an Advocacy Specialist in Omaha, Dillion Curren, has left the agency to work as a residential counselor at ISD (Iowa School for the Deaf) and that the agency is in the process of finding a replacement.
- Mr. Wyvill explained that the strategic planning process is going well. The agency has received great feedback on the written portion of the plan and that feedback will be presented to the full board during their March meeting. Town hall meetings will be scheduled virtually and closer to the end of summer, they will hopefully be in-person.
- Mr. Wyvill also updated the board about the news item in Scottsbluff where a deaf wrestler was not provided with adequate communication access. The agency and advocacy specialist in Scottsbluff have been advocating this past week in regards to this issue.

b. Rules and Regulations Update

- Ms. Sharon Sinkler, Interpreter Program Coordinator, provided a Rules and Regulations update. She shared that a public hearing was held on

February 19th and that no public comments were submitted prior to or at the hearing. The agency is now proceeding with the formal process of submitting paperwork to the Governor's office, the Secretary of State, the Legislative Executive Counsel and also the Attorney General's office. She thanked the Rules and Regulations task force for their work in producing an excellent document that passed through both boards and received no public comments.

Mr. McCowin asked what the position is of the IRB regarding the deaf wrestler and whether there is any responsibility for the IRB to advocate for interpreters. Mr. Wyvill explained that the deaf wrestler is deaf oral and does not use sign language to communicate and that an interpreter would not have been helpful in this situation. The referee didn't take their mask off and didn't attempt to communicate in a manner that they felt was appropriate.

Mr. Wyvill also updated the board that the NeAD and NAD has sent letters of support for the young man to NSAA, and that he had a meeting with NSAA this morning to express our concern about the lack of communication access as well as to express the family's concerns. NSAA will conduct a due diligence review and hopefully they will try and have that completed within the next two weeks. The family will then decide what to do next after the review.

J. Public Comment

No public comments.

K. Old Business

Acting Chair, Mr. Beyer, asked about the search for the vacancy on the IRB board. Mr. Wyvill reported that the full board will consider one application at the March meeting for an interpreter position and hopefully another interpreter position and the deaf representative will be considered at the full board meeting in June.

L. New Business

- **Set June 4th meeting date and location.** There were no objections to the proposed June 4th date and the board will proceed to schedule the next meeting on that date. The meeting is expected to be in-person at the Firefighter Hall in Lincoln.

M. Announcements

There were no announcements.

N. Adjourn

Mr. McCowin made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:30 pm. Ms. Nickels seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Apking, Mr. Beyer, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson, Ms. Nickels, Mr. McCowin, and Mr. Wyvill all voting aye. Ms. Williams and Ms. Flearl were absent.