

Approved June 11, 2021

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Full Commission Board Meeting
via Zoom**

March 12, 2021 Meeting Minutes

A. Opening

Chairperson Candice Arteaga started the meeting of the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) full commission board meeting on March 12, 2021, 8:30 am via Zoom.

B. Notice of Open Meeting

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 March 5, 2021, edition of the Omaha World Herald, a legal newspaper of general circulation in this state, as required by the Open Meetings Act. Governor Pete Ricketts' Executive Order No. 20-36, Corona Virus – Public Meetings Requirement Limited Waiver, dated November 25, 2020, 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. 20-36.

C. Roll Call

For the record, Board Members Ms. Candice Arteaga, Ms. Frances Beurivage, Mr. Jonathan Scherling, Ms. Sandra Shaw, Mr. Josh Sevier, Mr. Robert Feit, Mr. Jeremy Fitzpatrick and Ms. Valerie Hitz all present. Ms. Diane Schutt was absent for roll call. NCDHH Staff members present are Mr. John Wyvill, Executive Director; and Kelsey Cruz, Public Information Officer and Zoom moderator. Sign Language Interpreters present were Mr. Ben Sparks and Ms. Sue Gudenkauf. Ms. Margaret "Mydge" Heaney with Inclusive Communication Access Nebraska 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. Jonathan Scherling moved to accept the agenda as written. Board Member Ms. Sandra Shaw seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga,

Ms. Beaurivage, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Shaw, Mr. Feit, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Hitz and Mr. Sevier all voting aye. Ms. Schutt was absent.

F. Acceptance of Minutes

Board Member Robert Feit moved to accept the minutes for the December 11, 2020, board meeting as written. Board Member Ms. Candice Arteaga seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beaurivage, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Shaw, Mr. Feit, Mr. Fitzpatrick, and Mr. Sevier all voting aye. Ms. Hitz abstained. Ms. Schutt was absent.

Ms. Diane Schutt joined the meeting at 8:37.

G. Chairperson of the Board Report

1. Welcome of New Board Members

Board Chair Candace Arteaga welcomed the new board members Ms. Valerie Hitz and Mr. Joshua Sevier. Ms. Arteaga also recognized the return of board member Mr. Jeremy Fitzpatrick.

2. Public Comments

None

3. 2020 Annual Report

Kelsey Cruz gave a summary of the Annual Report, including some of the accomplishments for NCDHH in 2020. Notable items were the passage of LB965, a few community events, and the first Dr. Frank Turk Excellence in Education Award. She also discussed the Commission's response to Covid-19 including advocating where needed for equal communication access in COVID-19 situations and educating about the use of clear masks. She also mentioned that the Commission found several ways to advocate and educate virtually.

Mr. Jonathan Scherling moved to accept the 2020 Annual Report as presented. Board Member Mr. Robert Feit seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beaurivage, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Shaw, Mr. Feit, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Hitz and Mr. Sevier all voting aye.

4. Strategic Plan Update – review of written comments submitted

John Wyvill, Executive Director, mentioned that starting April 1st there will be a series of town hall meetings and feedback from those meetings will be presented at the June Board meeting.

Kelsey Cruz gave an update on some of the comments received so far. 60% of respondents 'strongly agree' with the NCDHH mission statement and 37% 'agree'. Ms. Cruz noted areas that respondents want included in the mission: education, LEAD-K, family services, interpreter support and focus on the elderly population living in assisted living facilities. 86% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the vision statement. Areas of focus that respondents want included in the vision: legislative and political advocacy, the terms 'equity' versus 'equality', more collaboration with other state agencies, working with the elderly

population, the removal of the word 'mainstream' in society and working with the interpreter community.

The highest ranked goal was to initiate and broaden the collection and dissemination of information regarding the strategies for living with, the prevention of and the impact of deafness and hearing loss along with the implementing and maintaining programs for those groups. Other goals mentioned: licensure for interpreters, education or sign language classes, Deafblind services, focus on the elderly, and legislative advocacy. These answers were based on 35-40 respondents.

Board Member Johnathan Scherling asked if this information could be shared with other organizations like NeAD. Mr. John Wyvill explained that this information is part of the board packet and therefore public information and could be shared. Ms. Candice Arteaga asked if the respondents were asked if they were deaf, hearing or hard of hearing and Ms. Cruz explained that they were not asked that question.

5. Legislative Updates

Mr. Wyvill gave an update on the legislative activities. He reported that the primary concern for this legislative session is the NCDHH budget. The appropriations committee recommended the NCDHH budget request which included allowing NCDHH to keep its carryover money. NCDHH has sent a letter in support for the budget so it is now under consideration and should be finalized in April.

Other legislative activities include sending a letter of support on LB14 which was the Adopt the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact. A letter was also sent at the suggestion of a couple of our team members in support of Governor Ricketts testifying about expanding broadband access. The purpose of the letter was to educate that committee about the importance of communication access and how a strong internet can help communication access issues.

Another legislative item that NCDHH has been working on is in regards to complaints received about the lack of access to committee meetings that are not captioned. Mr. Wyvill reported that the Nebraska Legislature will have the capacity to have captioning in committee meetings by the end of the year.

NCDHH has also been working with Senator Stinner regarding the Deaf wrestler in Scottsbluff.

6. Telephone Relay Service Appointments

Commissioner Schram and Tami Richardson-Nelson are asking for reappointment and NCDHH staff recommended that they be reappointed. Jerry Siders will be leaving the committee and NCDHH will be searching for a replacement and hope to find one before the June or fall board meeting.

Mr. Robert Feit moved to approve the Telephone Relay Service appointments of Commissioner Schram and Tami Richardson-Nelson. Board Member Mr. Jeremy Fitzpatrick seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Shaw, Mr. Feit, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Hitz and Mr. Sevier all voting aye.

7. Interpreter Review Board Appointments

Margie Propp is seeking appointment and Thomas Beyer, Peggy Williams and Richard McCowin have all decided to not seek reappointment. Their terms end June 30th. NCDHH is still recruiting and advertising for a deaf member and the additional interpreter position to serve on the IRB and hope to be able to present those recommendations to the full board for consideration at the June meeting. NCDHH staff recommends Margie Propp for appointment to the IRB.

Mr. Robert Feit moved to approve the appointment of Margie Propp to the Interpreter Review Board. Board Member Mr. Jonathan Scherling seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beaurivage, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Shaw, Mr. Feit, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Hitz and Mr. Sevier all voting aye.

8. Rules and Regulations – February 19, 2021, Public Hearing Update

John Wyvill reported that there were no public comments at the public hearing which means the next step is to submit the draft and other required paperwork to the Secretary of State, Governor, Attorney General's Office and the Executive Board of the Council and then to the Senate for approval. He mentioned that not receiving any public comments is a testimony to the leadership of the full board and also the Rules and Regulations task force along with the work of Sharon Sinkler to produce a draft proposal that considered and debated every stakeholder's input. Sharon Sinkler, Interpreter Program Coordinator, joined the meeting to be available to answer any questions the Board may have.

9. Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K) Update and Advisory Committee Appointments

Mr. Wyvill mentioned that Jonathan Scherling is the LEAD-K advisory committee chair and that Jessica Larrison, Education Advocate, is the person at NCDHH that has been working with Mr. Scherling on LEAD-K. Ms. Larrison joined the meeting to provide an update on LEAD-K. She reported that all four subcommittees have met at least once. The Qualifications and Training subcommittee has met the most and has decided that they want to have a licensed teacher perform the assessments. The committee is waiting on the specific assessments to see how many times they want to be retrained in those assessments. The Considerations Related to Implementations subcommittee has figured out how many students in Nebraska are deaf or hard of hearing and they have another meeting this month. The Assessment Instruments subcommittee has met once and they are meeting again next week to discuss all the assessments that they are currently reviewing. Reporting Results and Database subcommittee has had one meeting and they have been tasked with reading the 80-page Kansas City LEAD-K report. They reconvene in April.

H. Executive Director Report (John Wyvill)

1. Budget Report and Update

For our general budget, we are currently 7.21% under budget. For the salary budget, we are under budget by 6.95%. NCDHH has updated computers and equipment with the savings, and

it is expected that a return to normal spending will happen once COVID-19 is over. NCDHH is planning to have the Lincoln Salt Dogs game in the summer and the Omaha Zoo event. We will be spending money for the NeAD and neRID conferences and to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Ohio Association of the Deaf. Stephanie DeGroot, Business Manager, joined the meeting to answer any questions the Board may have.

2. Bi-weekly Reports/Advocacy Specialist's Top Ten Report

Mr. Wyvill reported that NCDHH met with NSAA about the Deaf wrestler in the Scottsbluff area and a finding is expected soon. The family will then have to decide what to do. It has been a good opportunity for advocacy and it has received a lot of publicity on the three networks throughout the state for television, print media and the daily Moth.

Ashley Wulf, Omaha Advocacy Specialist, has been working on Omaha airport access issues and issued a release yesterday calling for some changes.

Mr. Wyvill shared that Kim Davis, Lincoln Advocacy Specialist, has continued her three-hour online ASL class and it continues to be well received. She has developed a law enforcement track and one for the general public.

Board member Mr. Scherling asked if the airport advocacy was going to also involve the Lincoln Airport and Mr. Wyvill said that it may possibly but that at this time NCDHH is allowing time for a response from the Omaha airport and could circle back to Lincoln in the future.

3. Marketing Report

Kelsey Cruz, Public Information Officer, gave a marketing update. She reported that the Scottsbluff Deaf wrestler case has been a top post and has been really well received. Comments have been very positive and many are thankful for the Commission and their work in advocating for the wrestler and his family. Other important VLOGs include one Cody help put together for the Nebraska Olmstead plan and how we can provide support.

For upcoming events, the Commission has heard from the Lincoln Salt Dogs and they are having a season and schedule with fans and NCDHH will be selecting a date in the summer time. The Omaha office is working on something in the summer also with the Omaha Storm Chasers for a baseball game in that area. Ms. Cruz also mentioned how helpful Susan Whitaker, Scottsbluff Advocacy Specialist, has been in being a contact for the Lincoln office and working with the family of the Deaf wrestler in Scottsbluff.

Mr. Robert Feit moved to accept the Executive Director report. Board Member Mr. Jeremy Fitzpatrick seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Shaw, Mr. Feit, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Hitz and Mr. Sevier all voting aye.

Board member Frances Beurivage left the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

I. Public Comments

Board Member Jonathan Scherling informed the board that the Nebraska Deaf Heritage Museum and Cultural Center will be hosting their first ever webinar event on Saturday, April 3rd at 2:00. Attendance at the museum has been low due to COVID-19 and they will be sharing their action plan.

J. Old Business

No old business to report

K. New Business

No new business to report

L. Adjourn

Mr. Jeremy Fitzpatrick moved to adjourn at 9:35 a.m. Board Member Mr. Robert Feit seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Shaw, Mr. Feit, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Hitz and Mr. Sevier all voting aye. Ms. Beurivage was absent.

Next Meeting Dates

- Board Meeting dates for 2021
 - June 11, 2021 – Lincoln Firefighter’s Reception Hall, 241 Victory Lane, Lincoln NE
 - Mr. Robert Feit will be chair as Ms. Candice Arteaga will be absent.
 - September 10, 2021 (tentative out of town meeting)
 - December 10, 2021 – Lincoln Firefighter’s Reception Hall, 241 Victory Lane, Lincoln NE