

Nebraska Sign Language Interpreter Review Board Meeting

June 5, 2020; 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Held via Zoom

A. Welcome

The meeting of the Nebraska Interpreter Review Board (IRB) was called to order at 1:00 pm by Ms. Peggy Williams, Chairperson via Zoom.

B. Notice of Open Meeting

Chairperson, Ms. Peggy Williams 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. The agenda has been kept current and available at the Commission's office and on their website. The materials generally used by the board for this meeting are on the table in a public folder that is available to the general public for this meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, {Neb. Rev. Stat. 84-1412 (8)}.

Publication of official notice of the meeting appeared in the May 29, 2020 edition of the Omaha World Herald, a legal newspaper of general circulation in this state, as required by the Open Meetings Act.

C. Roll Call

For the record, Board Members Ms. Peggy Williams, Mr. Thomas Beyer, Ms. Vonda Apking, Mr. John Wyvill, Executive Director, Ms. Jessica Nickels, Ms. Nancy Flearl and Mrs. Tami Richardson-Nelson, were present. Mr. Richard McCowin (arrived at 1:06 pm).

Also present were Ms. Traci Cooney, Interpreter Licensing Specialist and Ms. Sharon Sinkler, Interpreter Program Coordinator.

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

D. Review of Agenda

Before Mr. Wyvill reviews the agenda, Ms. Williams asked him to review zoom etiquette items that she requested he develop for today's meeting. Mr. Wyvill read the etiquette items and then the agenda.

E. Acceptance of Agenda

Mrs. Tami Richardson-Nelson recommended that member's first and last name be listed on the agenda in the roll call section. Board Member, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson moved to accept the agenda as written. Board Member, Ms. Nancy Flearl seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Williams, Mr. Beyer, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson, Ms. Apking, Ms. Nickels, Mr. McCowin, Ms. Flearl, Mr. Wyvill all voting aye.

F. Acceptance of Minutes

Mrs. Richardson-Nelson stated a change on page 3 in section J. That change was to the spelling of the word, "Board." Mrs. Richardson-Nelson made a motion to approve the February 28, 2020

meeting minutes as amended. Board Member, Ms. Flearl seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Williams, Mr. Beyer, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson, Ms. Nickels, Ms. Apking, Mr. McCowin, Mr. Wyvill, Ms. Flearl all voting aye.

G. Chairperson of the Board's Report

Ms. Williams spoke regarding the changes that have taken place since the last IRB meeting. Most people are working remotely and unable to visit family and friends because of COVID-19. She asked that everyone reach out to neighbors and see if there is anything they need help with. She also spoke regarding George Floyd and what has happened as a result of his death in this country. She asked that everyone pray for the country and for his family.

H. Public Comments

None.

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

a. COVID-19 Responses

- Mr. Wyvill explained that NCDHH Staff has had a stay connected check in campaign during this COVID time. Staff reach out to other stakeholders and clients to see if there is anything NCDHH can assist them with and a general welfare check. NCDHH staff have been working remotely but will return to working in offices on June 15. While things in the community are opening back up, NCDHH will take a slow approach to interacting with the public. The NCDHH staff will get used to working in the new environment and then slowly begin working with clients face to face. NCDHH has also advocated and reached out to organizations regarding clear masks. These masks aren't a solution but they are a helpful step in effective communication with the deaf and hard of hearing communities. NCDHH is also working with consumers and testing sites. Those sites aren't accessible for deaf and hard of hearing consumers.

b. Complaint Update

- The complaint that was referred to the Full Board at the last meeting has been given to the Attorney General's office. Due to COVID-19, the process isn't moving very fast. Mr. Wyvill hopes that the Attorney General's office will have the formal complaint filed and ready by the September Full Board meeting.

c. Legislature Update

- The Legislature will return to session on July 20. We have recently seen the impact COVID-19 has had on the budget for the City of Lincoln, Creighton University and University of Nebraska. We anticipate there may be the same type of impact on state government. Currently NCDHH is in good shape with fund savings from 2 open positions. That may change later and Mr. Wyvill will keep everyone updated. The state currently has a hiring freeze but once that is lifted NCDHH will look at hiring for the Scottsbluff Advocacy Specialist position. NCDHH is also

looking at changing the current open position in Lincoln to another Advocacy Specialist position in the Lincoln office.

- Lead-K and the American Sign Language bill have been merged together. As a result, the bill has been designated as a speaker priority bill. The Department of Education has a fiscal note tied to the Lead-K portion. The Speaker has made it clear that he will not schedule any bill for vote that has a fiscal note tied to it. If NDE doesn't remove the fiscal note, the bill will be dead on arrival.

d. Bridging the Gap

- The Full Board took into consideration the concerns raised about the gap from ITP students graduating college and becoming certified in regards to the Rules and Regulations. They have tasked Mr. Wyvill and Ms. Sinkler to work with stakeholders and develop a proposal to review in July regarding a mentoring program. That proposal will be presented to the Interpreter Issues Committee within the next 2 weeks. They will advise us whether we present it to the Full Board in July or to go back to the stakeholder work group and provide more information. NCDHH is also looking into providing a mentoring training in September to hearing and deaf members interested in becoming mentors. Mr. Wyvill stressed that the license created for mentees would be an apprentice license and that the word choice is very important to separate from what the word provisional means to people.

e. Rules and Regulations Update

- Mr. Wyvill let everyone know that the Rules and Regulations were reviewed by the Attorney General's office and it was found that NCDHH had not done a step correctly and so the process needed to start over. He stated that if the mentoring program is approved and an apprentice license is approved, that would need worked into the Rules and Regulations and the process would need to start over anyways.
- Mrs. Tami Richardson-Nelson started a discussion about a possible perceived conflict of interest in the complaint investigation process. Discussion ensued. Mr. Wyvill stated that hiring an outside investigator was a new process to our agency. It was to provide training for the Interpreter Program Coordinator and was a learning experience. What was perceived as a possible conflict of interest would not happen again.

f. Interpreter Workshops

- Mr. Wyvill provided information that Ms. Sinkler is working on a workshop scheduled for July 17 and 18 via zoom with Sabrina Smith as the presenter. The cost for interpreters to attend is \$5, whether they attend one or all three sessions. NCDHH is also in the process of working with neRID to sponsor presenters during their fall conference for interpreters.

J. Public Comment

No public comments.

K. Old Business

Nothing to report.

L. New Business

- **Set September 2020 meeting date and location**

The next IRB meeting will be on August 28, 2020 starting at 1pm. More details will be provided to the members at a later date as to whether the meeting will be held in person or via zoom. Election of officers will take place at the August meeting.

M. Announcements

None

N. Adjourn (Ms. Williams)

Mr. McCowin made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:30 pm. Ms. Flearl seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Apking, Mr. Beyer, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson, Mr. McCowin, Ms. Nickels, Ms. Williams, Mr. Wyvill, Ms. Flearl all voting aye.