

## **Nebraska Sign Language Interpreter Review Board Meeting**

September 6, 2019; 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

4600 Valley Rd, Room 4A, Lincoln, NE

### **A. Welcome**

The meeting of the Nebraska Interpreter Review Board (IRB) was called to order at 1:00 pm by Ms. Peggy Williams, Chairperson at 4600 Valley Rd, Room 4A in Lincoln, NE.

### **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 August 30, 2019 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. Jessica Nickels, Ms. Vonda Apking, Mr. John Wyvill, Executive Director, and Mrs. Tami Richardson-Nelson, were present. Board Member, Mr. Richard McCowin arrived at 1:20 pm. Ms. Nancy Flearl, was absent.

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.

Members of the public in attendance were Ms. Crystal Pierce and Ms. Frances Beurivage.

### **D. Review of Agenda**

Mr. Wyvill added that items marked in red or pink are action times.

### **E. Acceptance of Agenda**

Board Member, Ms. Apking moved to accept the agenda as written. Board Member, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Williams, Mr. Beyer, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson, Ms. Nickels, Ms. Apking, Mr. Wyvill all voting aye. Mr. McCowin and Ms. Flearl were absent.

### **F. Acceptance of Minutes**

Mr. Wyvill made a motion to approve the June 8, 2019 meeting minutes. Board Member, Ms.

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

#### **G. Chairperson of the Board's Report**

Ms. Williams asked that everyone introduce themselves for the new Board member Mrs. Richardson-Nelson. Ms. Williams also recognized the interpreters and thanked them for coming.

#### **H. Public Comments**

Ms. Crystal Pierce introduced herself as the President of neRID. She stated that several interpreters have approached her with concerns that they don't feel they have a voice in the complaint process. She stated they don't know when they can speak to support their side of the story. She feels that this information needs to be sent out and clearly state where they are able to speak. Ms. Pierce also expressed the concern of the gap interpreters have between graduation and certification which was brought to her attention from a deaf community member. She states that since QAST is gone, there isn't any way for the students to improve their skills and become test ready. She mentioned the possibility of considering a provisional license that allows these persons to interpret with a mentor/certified interpreter.

**Mr. McCowin entered the meeting at 1:20pm.**

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

##### **a. Agency Updates**

- Mr. Wyvill reported that the Full Board will be discussing where they stand on support of LEAD-K. They will be looking at that for the 2021 Legislative session.
- Mr. Wyvill reported that the Full Board will also be looking at new legislation recognizing American Sign Language as a language. The Department of Education already recognizes it but the Full Board would like to see it in legislation.
- Mr. Wyvill reported that NCDHH will be interviewing for the Advocacy Specialist position that was held by Teresa Hevner in the Omaha office as she had been offered and accepted another opportunity.
- Mr. Wyvill reported that NCDHH will be holding the Deaf Day at the Zoo in Omaha on September 22.

##### **b. Review of Comments from the Rules and Regulations Public Hearing**

- Mr. Wyvill reminded members that Ms. Sinkler will be attending the CLEAR investigator training. He stated that based on the Board and the interpreter community, they want the investigator to be an interpreter as they understand interpreter issues.
- Mr. Wyvill updated the members that they were provided a chart of the complaint process as a result of the public hearing comments. He explained that this chart had highlighted areas where interpreters are

afforded the opportunity to speak. He provided an overview of the complaint process.

- Members discussed the grievance process and that it needs to be more clearly defined. They discussed what they want their recommendation to the Full Board to be.

Mr. Beyer made the motion that the Rules and Regulations are not to move forward until the IRB can review/revise the grievance process. Board Member, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson seconded the motion.

Mr. McCowin motioned to amend the previous motion to replace “revise” with develop a list of questions that will be submitted to the Full Board and the Attorney General and the Executive Director. Board Member, Mr. Beyer seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued regarding the understanding of the complaint process.

Mrs. Richardson-Nelson made a motion to table discussion of the two previous motions until the December 2019 meeting. Board member, Mr. McCowin, seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Williams, Mr. Beyer, Ms. Nickels, Ms. Apking all voting aye. Mr. Wyvill abstained. Ms. Flearl was absent.

- c. Ms. Apking made a motion to inform the Full Board that the IRB needs more time to develop their suggested language changes to the Rules and Regulations based on the receipt of the public hearing comments. Board member, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Williams, Mr. Beyer, Ms. Nickels, Ms. Apking, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson all voting aye. Mr. Wyvill abstained. Ms. Flearl was absent.

#### **J. Public Comment**

Ms. Frances Beurivage stated that she has been contacted by several interpreters that have experienced receiving some complaints against them in the recent months and of how they actually feel intimidated by the process. She referenced the fact that the first letter to inform the interpreter that a complaint was filed is sent certified mail. They do not feel that the process gives them enough explanation of where it is that they can contribute their comments and when is the process a formal complaint. Discussion ensued regarding letting the person with the complaint filed against them know who filed the complaint. Ms. Beurivage suggests that the whole complaint process be more user friendly for all persons involved and the process needs to be outlined clearly.

- K. Ms. Pierce stated that she feels the CLEAR training will be good for Ms. Sinkler but to keep in mind it trains on evidence based complaints whereas the interpreter complaints are more a “he said, she said.”

**L. Old Business**

Nothing to report

**M. New Business**

- **Set December 2019 meeting date and location**

The next IRB meeting will be on December 6, 2019 in Omaha starting at 1pm. More details will be provided to the members at a later date.

**N. Announcements**

- Ms. Nickels announced that she will be having her second child in the spring of 2020.

**O. Adjourn (Ms. Williams)**

Board Member, Ms. Apking made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:27pm. Board Member, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson 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 all voting aye. Ms. Flearl was absent.