

Nebraska Sign Language Interpreter Review Board Meeting

February 25, 2022 from 11am – 1pm

Lincoln Fire Fighter's Reception Hall, 241 Victory Lane, Lincoln NE

A. Welcome

The meeting of the Nebraska Interpreter Review Board (IRB) was called to order at 11:02 am by Ms. Nancy Flearl, Acting Chairperson, at Lincoln Fire Fighter's Reception Hall, 241 Victory Lane, Lincoln, Nebraska.

B. Notice of Open Meetings Act

Acting Chairperson Ms. Nancy Flearl 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)}. A copy of the Open Meetings Act is available with the public folder for the duration of the meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

Publication of official notice of the meeting appeared in the February 18, 2022, 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. Vonda Apking, Ms. Nancy Flearl, Ms. Margie Propp, Mrs. Tami Richardson-Nelson and Mr. John Wyvill, Executive Director were present. Ms. Tricia Tighe and Ms. Meghann Cassidy were absent for roll call.

Interpreter for the meeting, Ms. Sharon Sinkler, Interpreter Program Coordinator

D. Review of Agenda

Executive Director John Wyvill reviewed the agenda with the Board Members.

E. Acceptance of Agenda

Ms. Margie Propp moved to accept the agenda as written. Mrs. Tami Richardson-Nelson seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Apking, Ms. Flearl, Ms. Propp, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson, Mr. Wyvill all voting aye. Ms. Cassidy and Ms. Tighe were absent.

F. Acceptance of Minutes

Ms. Vonda Apking noted to change the adjourn time to 11:36 am, versus pm in the December 3, 2021 meeting minutes. With that change made to the meeting minutes, Ms. Apking made the motion to approve, and Ms. Margie Propp seconded. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Apking, Ms. Flearl, Ms. Propp, Mrs.

Richardson-Nelson, Mr. Wyvill all voting aye. Ms. Cassidy and Ms. Tighe were absent.

G. Public Comments

None

H. Executive Director Report

a. Agency Updates

- Mr. Wyvill shared with the members that NCDHH has had two employees recently leave the agency, Mr. Cody McEvoy, Behavioral Health Coordinator and Ms. Jessica Larrison, Education Advocate. Mr. Wyvill is currently conducting interviews for the Behavioral Health Coordinator position, a decision on Mr. McEvoy's replacement should be made in the next 2 weeks. Ms. Susan Whitaker, Advocacy Specialist from our Scottsbluff office is absorbing the Education Advocate job duties.
- On March 12, 2022, NCDHH will be having an event called "Coffee with a Cop". This will be held from 9 am – 11 am at The Mill, 333 South 21st St, Lincoln NE. This is for casual conversation and mingling with members of the Lincoln Police Department.
- NCDHH will be hosting an event at the Lincoln Children's Zoo on April 24, 2022. More information and details will be shared at a later date.
- Additional events that are hosted by NCDHH
 - Omaha zoo in the fall
 - Salt Dogs in July
 - Baseball game in Scottsbluff
- Mr. Wyvill also added that Ms. Sharon Sinkler is working on providing a workshop for both hearing and deaf licensed interpreters.

b. Legislative Updates

- LB 928 – Provide for closed-captioning or transcripts of certain campaign advertisements under the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act
 - This bill is being merged with the election bill.
- LB 1257 – Appropriate federal funds for health equity liaisons for various state commissions
 - This is part of the American Rescue Funds Act (ARPA)

- LB 1161 – Appropriate ARPA funds to the Nebraska Department of Education for programs and training for interpreters that provide services to students who are deaf or hard of hearing
 - Funding to NDE for sign language interpreter training, services, and equipment for deaf and hard of hearing students. Overall goal is to improve EIPA scores
 - Conversation about the need for better EIPA scores

- LB 1162 -- Appropriate ARPA funds to the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to support in-person interpreting in rural areas and legal communication access
 - This would include funding for sign language interpreters outside of the Omaha and Lincoln areas, including transportation, overnight stay, travel time, mileage.
 - Funding for costs of in-person legal interpreting services provided outside of the courtroom.

Mrs. Richardson-Nelson requested that Mr. Wyvill email the board members regarding the legislative bills and which senators are on the bills so that the members can send support letters if they choose to.

I. Public Comments

None

J. Old Business

- a. Mr. Wyvill brought up to the board the list of preferred interpreters for the IRB meetings that was included in their binders. It was decided that members of the board would email their preferred list to Mr. Wyvill and Ms. Sinkler.

- b. Ms. Propp asked for a follow up from a question that Ms. Tighe raised at the December 3, 2021 meeting regarding the use of Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) in the schools. Ms. Flearl added that she met with Ms. Teresa Coonts from Department of Education. Ms. Coonts shared that their first choice is always a live interpreter in the schools, however, will utilize VRI if that is the only option left to provide a sign language interpreter to the student.

K. New Business

- a. Discussion on having Ms. Sinkler send out a Doodle Poll offering several dates for the members to choose from. Also had conversation on if they could take care of figuring out dates for the rest of 2022.

- b. Ms. Propp asked if NCDHH has received any applicants for Ms. Jessica Nickels' position. Mr. Wyvill responded that NCDHH has not received any applicants.

L. Announcements

Ms. Propp commented that this is the second meeting where there has been nothing to discuss regarding complaints. Asking if this is because of COVID, or is there other reasons? Mr. Wyvill replied that issues are still going on, individuals are just not filing their informal complaints. Also adding that with the use of the interpreter referral agencies, they are now handling the issues that are brought to their attention.

Mrs. Richardson-Nelson shared that Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) doesn't have a sign language interpreter to serve their deaf clients. Ms. Flearl added that the issue is with VR not being able to find freelance interpreters when needed to meet with the clients. Hoping that this issue will resolve when they hire a replacement for Ms. Nickels.

M. Adjourn

Mrs. Tami Richardson-Nelson made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:45 am. Ms. Margie Propp seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Apking, Ms. Flearl, Ms. Propp, Mrs. Richardson-Nelson, Mr. Wyvill all voting aye. Ms. Cassidy and Ms. Tighe were absent.