

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Full Commission Board Meeting – June 14, 2013 – Amended and approved on 9/13/2013
University of Nebraska, Kearney College of Education, Room B154
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Chairperson Mr. Steven Manning called the meeting to order at 8:43 a.m.

B. Roll Call

Members present were Mr. Michael Brummer, Ms. Eileen Dakan, Mr. Dillard Delts, Ms. Amy Kasch, Dr. Carol Lomicky, Mr. Steven Manning, Dr. Jan Moore, Ms. Diane Muelleman and Ms. Margie Propp. Staff members present were Dr. Peter Seiler, Executive Director, Ms. Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist, Ms. Lori Burrage, Business Manager and Mr. Ben Sparks, Interpreter Program Assistant. Interpreters were Ms. Crystal Pierce and Ms. Lorelei Waldron.

C. Acceptance of Agenda

Mr. Manning asked for acceptance of the agenda. Dr. Seiler asked to add F.3., Voc Rehab update. Dr. Lomicky asked to add a discussion about the town hall meeting. Mr. Brummer stated one person expressed concerns regarding the NSTEP process. **Ms. Propp made a motion to accept the agenda as amended to add F.3., Voc Rehab update; F.4., Discussion and review of the town hall meeting and F.5., An overview of the NSTEP voucher process. Ms. Muelleman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

D. Acceptance of Minutes

1. Full Commission Meeting – March 8, 2013

Mr. Manning asked for acceptance of the March 8, 2013 minutes. Ms. Propp stated she asked to serve on both the Interpreter and Education committees. Mr. Brummer stated he asked to serve on the Legislative and Education committees. **Ms. Propp made a motion to accept the March 8th meeting minutes as amended to add Mr. Brummer to the Legislative Committee and Ms. Propp to the Education Committee. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

Mr. Manning asked for acceptance of the May 28, 2013 minutes. Mr. Brummer made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Ms. Propp seconded the motion. **Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

E. Business Manager's Report

Ms. Burrage reported on the end of the fiscal year carryover funds and requested suggestions from the Board members on using those funds. The budget information is required to be entered into the Payroll and Financial Center by July 31, 2013.

F. Executive Director's Report

1. University of Nebraska at Kearney Web Design Project – Information

Dr. Seiler reported on UNK's logo design. Ms. Dakan stated it was discussed previously that the word access was to be capitalized. Mr. Delts stated it is the board's decision to approve the new logo. Dr. Lomicky asked if the approval includes the website changes too. Dr. Seiler responded that no decision has been made on website design because it needs to match the State's rules. Ms. Dakan

requested for the printed materials to be reviewed for spelling, spacing and for a professional appearance. Ms. Dakan asked for a QR code to be added to enable accessing the website with smart phones. Dr. Seiler asked Mr. Ben Sparks for his input. Mr. Sparks asked the board to consider the cost of a new logo which would involve revising all the printed materials currently on hand in addition to display banners. The replacement cost of the display banners is estimated at \$15,000.00. Nebraska.gov handles the technical part of the website at no charge and they are not willing to maintain the new website. It is not their design and they are not familiar with the language it is written in. Mr. Sparks stated the website needs to be accessible for deaf-blind consumers. Dr. Moore expressed frustration that the UNK students spent an entire semester on this project and still no decision has been made. Dr. Seiler suggested tabling this until the new director is hired. Ms. Muelleman and Ms. Kasch did not approve of the new logo. Discussion was held. **Ms. Muelleman made a motion to table the discussion on the brochures and the new logo until all the board members have copies to review. Ms. Kasch seconded the motion.** Ms. Dakan asked that all the board members receive paper copies of the materials to review. **Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

2. Review of Issue with Email Votes

The Board discussed the Open Meetings Act and understood that email voting is a violation of the Act.

3. Voc Rehab (VR) Update

Dr. Seiler reported focus group meetings were held in Kearney, Lincoln and Omaha for the purpose of gathering information for VR. The report itself is the property of VR. He contacted them but the director is out of town. He asked about the special position to find employment facilities for deaf consumers and he was told there will be a meeting to discuss filling the position.

5. Overview of the NSTEP Voucher Process

Mr. Brummer stated an attendee at the town hall meeting had a complaint that the NSTEP voucher is limited to one device per household. Dr. Seiler stated two land lines are not approved but it is possible to request more than one piece of equipment if the needs are different. For example, if one person needs a video phone and one needs an amplified phone, a request can be made to the Public Service Commission for both items. Ms. Muelleman asked if Dr. Seiler had a way to evaluate the Field Reps to be sure they are all trained to understand this process. Dr. Seiler responded yes and no. Discussion followed.

4. Discussion and Review of Town Hall Meeting

Ms. Dakan commented she was very excited about the turnout for the town hall meeting last night. There were about 30 in attendance and several signed up for future meetings. Ms. Muelleman took notes and offered the following outline for future town hall meetings:

1. More publicity is needed. Publicize ahead of time including local news cast, newspapers including a personal interest story and flyers with location information.
2. The local Field Rep should attend so attendees know their advocate.
3. Bring brochures, promotional materials, business cards and copies of the ECommunicator.
4. Provide information on when and where local information sharing groups meet.
5. Use six or seven topic points on slides.
6. Bring equipment; loop systems, pocket talkers, amplified phones.
7. Provide NCDHH notepads to people as they come in to write down questions and dedicate the last 30 minutes to answer their questions.
8. Repeat audience questions into the microphone before answering.
9. Cover financial help information.
10. Provide a checklist of what to look for when purchasing a hearing aid and picking a hearing

aid dispenser.

Dr. Lomicky added providing the printed version of the Communicator is important based on comments from attendees that they do not use the electronic version. Dr. Seiler stated there are a limited number of Field Reps to do support groups. Dr. Lomicky stated she is very frustrated that we are not getting information out to people. Based on the number of people that signed up last night, there is clearly a need. Mr. Manning agreed and that it is also concerning to him. Dr. Moore stated future presentations need to be tailored to the audience and focused on their needs. Ms. Propp asked why the Field Rep was not there. Dr. Seiler stated he made the decision not to have her come. Ms. Muelleman stated more Field Reps are needed. Dr. Seiler stated he wants to look into filling the part-time Field Rep position, moving the North Platte office to Scottsbluff and moving a Field Rep from Omaha to Kearney. He would leave the Field Rep in Lincoln to work with the Deaf Blind program and one Field Rep in Omaha. The carryover money could be used to cover the expenses of these changes.

G. Chairperson's Report

1. Executive Director's Annual Evaluation: Executive Session

Ms. Propp made a motion to close the session for the Executive Director's annual evaluation at 10:40 a.m. Mr. Delts seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Ms. Muelleman made a motion to open the session at 11:09 a.m. Ms. Propp seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

2. Update on Executive Director Search – Search and Interview Committee

Mr. Manning reported there are six applicants but the information will not be provided until the election of officers which may change the Search and Interview Committee. All the information will be kept confidential within the Search and Interview Committee. **Mr. Delts made a motion to keep the Search and Interview Committee members the same; Mr. Manning, Dr. Moore, Ms. Muelleman and Ms. Propp. Ms. Propp seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.** Dr. Seiler stated the committee will narrow the applicants for the interview process. Dr. Lomicky asked what the interview process will be. Mr. Manning responded that has not been decided.

Dr. Seiler stated he received an informal response from State Personnel regarding the 20% increase for the Interim Director. State Personnel wanted to know what was discussed in the closed session to justify a 20% increase which they feel is excessive. They will not issue a formal response or approve a 20% increase. They feel a 10% increase is reasonable based on an interim director not having the full responsibility of the director, they do not do budget management or handle legislative issues. They handle the day to day operations until a new director is hired. **Ms. Dakan made a motion to accept State Personnel's recommendation of a 10% increase for the Interim Director while serving in that role. Ms. Muelleman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

3. Presentation of Appreciation Awards to Departing Members of the Interpreter Review Board: Gary Theiler and Bob Deaton

Dr. Seiler reported that the new director will present the awards to these two individuals. Mr. Delts asked for the Board Chairperson to also be there for the presentation.

Mr. Delts asked for further discussion on what the Board wants to see in a new director as outlined in his email to the Board members. Ms. Dakan agreed Mr. Delts raised good questions. Discussion was held. Ms. Propp asked the Board members to provide their feedback to the Search and Interview Committee by June 28th. The committee will meet to review the recommendations.

H. Subcommittee Discussion

Mr. Delts stated the Awards and Recognition Committee is missing from committee list. No further committee discussions.

J. New Business

1. Approval of Bethany Koubsky and Cheryl Poff to Interpreter Review Board

Mr. Brummer made a motion to accept Ms. Koubsky and Ms. Poff to the Interpreter Review Board. Mr. Delts seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

2. Approval of Annual Travel Policy

Dr. Seiler reported this is a requirement of State Accounting. **Mr. Delts made a motion to accept the annual travel policy for fiscal year 2013-2014. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

3. Approval of Executive Director Leave Policy

Mr. Delts made a motion to accept the Executive Director leave policy for fiscal year 2013-2014. Mr. Brummer seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

4. Approval of Executive Director work-related travel and expenses

Dr. Moore made a motion to accept the Executive Director work-related travel and expenses policy for fiscal year 2013-14. Ms. Kasch seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

5. Approval of Budget for Fiscal Year 2013-2014

Dr. Seiler offered several suggestions including changing the vacant part time Field Rep position to a grant writer, filling the full time Public Information Officer position to assist the Interpreter Assistant, moving the North Platte office to Scottsbluff and moving one Omaha Field Rep to Kearney. He has approved using carryover funds for a mental health provider workshop that Ms. Williams is planning in the fall. He suggested using carryover money for moving expenses for the new director if needed and another NET show focusing on t-coils. Dr. Lomicky requested purchasing counter loop systems for every office. Ms. Muelleman asked for headsets for the interpreters to be used with the loop system. Dr. Seiler asked Ms. Burrage for input. Ms. Burrage stated while carryover funds are available for opening an office in Kearney, there are no funds in the base budget to sustain an office. A Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) must be submitted to State Personnel to change a position classification and we will need to be sure the change will not exceed the Personal Services Limitations (PSL) to get approval. Ms. Dakan responded the director and senior staff should be able to write grants, there is no need for a grant writer. Discussion was held. **Ms. Dakan made a motion to approve the base budget proposal for fiscal year 2013-2014. Ms. Propp seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

Dr. Seiler stated the carryover budget will be voted on later and requested for the Board to submit ideas for using those funds. Ms. Dakan requested that a discussion on the carryover funds be held. Ms. Dakan suggested using the funds for publishing new promotional materials, brochures and banners, new website development, new equipment, counter loops and headsets, expanding professional development for staff and having a workshop with an audiologist on hearing loss and hearing aids in the central part of the state. Ms. Dakan does not want to close any offices and would like to add an office. She felt based on the town hall meeting attendance that Kearney may be a good location for the part time Field Rep. Ms. Dakan stated Region 3 and other groups in Kearney may be open to sharing office space. She felt strongly that the Field Reps need to travel more and having offices in Lincoln, Omaha and Scottsbluff is not a good idea. Ms. Muelleman requested to add Field Rep staff. Ms. Propp stated this should be a discussion with the new director. Ms. Dakan requested this to be on the September meeting agenda. Dr. Moore asked if the staff attend the State Fair. Dr. Seiler stated they attend on Older Nebraskans Day; the fair is 11 days and expensive. Mr. Brummer suggested developing a Better Business Bureau DVD on which hearing aids are good. Dr. Lomicky suggested expanding education for parents and the public on hearing aids, t-coils and licensed hearing aid dispensers. Ms. Propp commented all these suggestions involve serving the hard of hearing but not the Deaf community. Mr. Brummer suggested joining the Nebraska Deaf Facebook page to make the Deaf community aware of services and activities.

J.6. Approval of Rules and Regulation for Interpreter Licensure

Ms. Propp made a motion to table this until the September meeting. Mr. Brummer seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Brummer, yes; Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Propp, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

J.7. Election of Officers

a. Chairperson

Ms. Moore nominated Mr. Manning. Mr. Delts nominated Ms. Propp. Ms. Kasch nominated Ms. Muelleman. Ms. Manning accepted the nomination, Ms. Propp and Ms. Muelleman declined. Mr. Manning was elected by acclamation.

b. Vice Chairperson

Ms. Propp nominated Dr. Moore for Vice Chairperson. Dr. Moore accepted the nomination. Dr. Moore was elected by acclamation.

c. Secretary

Mr. Brummer nominated Ms. Muelleman for Secretary. Ms. Muelleman accepted the nomination. Ms. Muelleman was elected by acclamation.

Next Meeting – September 13, 2013 in Lincoln starting at 8:30 a.m.

Ms. Williams clarified that a meeting to finalize the carryover fund budget will be held via video conferencing in July.

Meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m.