

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Full Commission Board Meeting – June 8, 2012 – Approved 9/14/2012
Craft State Office Building, 200 S Silber, North Platte, NE

Chairperson Mr. Dillard Delts called the meeting to order at 8:44 a.m.

B. Roll Call

Members present were Mr. Dillard Delts, Dr. Carol Lomicky, Mr. Steven Manning, Dr. Raymond Meester, Dr. Jan Moore and Ms. Diane Muelleman. Members absent were Ms. Amy Kasch and Ms. Susan Petersen. Staff attending was Dr. Peter Seiler, Executive Director and Ms. Lori Burrage, Business Manager. Interpreters present were Ms. Lorelei Waldron and Ms. Margie Propp.

C. Acceptance of the Agenda

Mr. Delts asked for acceptance of the agenda. Dr. Seiler asked to add a policy for donations under New Business. **Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous.**

D. Acceptance of the Minutes

1. Full Commission Meeting – March 9, 2012

Mr. Manning provided changes to the minutes and made motion to accept the changes. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

E. Business Manager's Report

1. General Ledger Report

2. Carryover Funds Plan

Ms. Burrage provided an estimate of the carryover funds and a list of proposed uses of the carryover funds. Dr. Lomicky asked if an additional loop system could be purchased to be used for demonstrations in the central and western areas of the state. Dr. Seiler responded that could be done. There is already a loop system in the North Platte office. A loan can be made if staff or a board member would assume responsibility for the loop system. The loop systems are not loaned to individuals or businesses as it is difficult to insure all the pieces are returned. Ms. Muelleman suggested changing the statutes to charge a deposit for all loaned equipment. **Dr. Lomicky made a motion to accept the carryover fund plan. Dr. Moore seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

F. Executive Director's Report

1. Budget Discussion and Budget Plan Approval

Dr. Seiler asked for ideas for another NET program. Dr. Seiler stated staff

training will include IEP, autism, new technology such as iPads and iPhones and advocacy. He plans to add signed and closed captioned videos on the Commission's website. Carryover funds will be used for a NET program, training and videos. Ms. Burrage will email the exact carryover amounts at the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Muelleman clarified that the board will be involved with how the money is spent. Dr. Moore stated that based on the town hall meeting, elderly people are confused on hearing aids and hearing aid dispensers and new technology such as the loop system and amplified phones. Dr. Lomicky asked for a priority of the carryover ideas. Dr. Seiler responded he does not have a priority at this time. Dr. Seiler plans to identify training for staff to attend. Dr. Seiler stated that he does not have time to go to all the IEP meetings so all the Field Reps will be trained in IEP processes and procedures which will make him the backup for complex IEP meetings. New marketing ideas will include stress balls in the shape of an ear, candy and better quality pens to distribute at booths.

Dr. Seiler and Ms. Burrage will continue to work on the biennium budget for FY 13-15 which is due September 15, 2012. The budget will include a modification plan which in the past has been a 5% reduction in the base budget. The agency will need to identify which programs or positions it will eliminate if a reduction is required. The next board meeting is September 14th, therefore the proposed budget will be sent to the board for approval with confirmation at the September meeting. **Dr. Lomicky made a motion to approve the budget plan and for Dr. Seiler to continue working on the biennium budget plan including a 5% reduction plan. Mr. Manning seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

2. Information and Job Posting for Field Representative II

Dr. Seiler stated there are two vacant positions, one in Lincoln and one in North Platte. Dr. Seiler stated with the North Platte vacancy, he would see if a candidate is interested in having the office in another town other than North Platte. If the person is willing to move then perhaps the office may be moved. An interview committee has been setup and he hopes to have the person(s) ready to start on July 1st.

3. State Auditor's Report

Dr. Seiler reported the report has three parts; the first part is the attestation, the second part is the main report or list of concerns and the third part is the exit conference findings. Several recommendations have been implemented, for example, a new hire letter that includes the start date and hiring rate. He will review and document the licensing and interpreter fees along with the mental health office rent. There was a concern about a workshop funded by a grant in which enrollees from counties other than the target counties were allowed to register. Excess mileage while using a state car is another concern. Contractual agreements will be reviewed by the Attorney General's office. Dr. Seiler has developed a new policy for accepting honorariums or donations which will be discussed under New Business. These are just examples of findings that NCDHH need to review and determine how to implement.

Mr. Manning stated that three board members attended the exit conference and observed the discussion. Dr. Meester stated he shared his frustrations that NCDHH gets different answers from different agencies and the oversight they are requesting takes a lot

of staff time. Additional report findings connected with Dr. Seiler will be discussed in the closed session and the board will decide what action to take.

5. Affirmation on Kathryn “Kay” Hershey

Dr. Seiler reported the wording was not clear on the intention on how long to fill the part time Administrative Assistant position, six months or one year. **Dr. Meester made a motion to affirm filling the position for one year. Mr. Manning seconded the motion.** Dr. Lomicky asked for clarification on reviewing the position. The position will be reviewed at the end of six months to see if the position is needed. **Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

4. Mission and Vision Statements

Dr. Seiler reported that he and the staff had planned on reviewing and possibly revising the mission, vision and objectives for the next three years. However, with two staff leaving, this activity will be delayed until there is a full staff. After the positions are filled, all three will be reviewed and presented to the board for review and approval. Dr. Seiler provided the mission and vision statements for the board to review. Mr. Delts stated he has been attending community meetings and the community wants education and advocacy. Mr. Manning stated the word “inform” is already there. Mr. Delts responded, educating is different than informing. Dr. Seiler stated the feeling from the town hall meeting is that people feel helpless. Dr. Moore and Dr. Lomicky were able to provide them more information on cochlear implants, hearing aids and hearing aid dispensers. IEP meetings are another example, the parents don’t fully understand so the Commission is advocating for them.

7. Update on Task Force for State Interpreter Assessment

Dr. Seiler reported the Task Force does not want the word “assessment” used. The purpose is not to assess an interpreter’s strengths and weakness, it is to test their interpreting skills. The Task Force members have agreed that any QAST level 4 or 5 will be grandfathered in and will be able to continue their certification as long as the CEUs are maintained. The Task Force has not made any decision on what testing tool will be used. The plan is to have a forum for Deaf people and for interpreters to gather their input. Dr. Seiler is not sure if there will be a separate forum for interpreters. Mr. Manning stated the Full Board needs to approve the grandfathering in of QAST level 4 – 5. Dr. Seiler stated the board will vote on all the final recommendations but no action is needed today. Mr. Manning stated the Task Force had concerns about the validity of testing including testing for educational interpreters. There was a healthy discussion and the interpreters and Deaf people really came together.

6. Correction of an Item in the Employee Handbook

Dr. Seiler stated there is an error regarding exempt employees in the Overtime, Compensatory Time, Flex Time section of the handbook. The Business Manager is not exempt therefore he is asking to remove the entire sentence. **Dr. Meester made a motion to accept the change. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

8. New Open Meeting Act and Posting of the Board Minutes

After Mr. Delts shared with Dr. Seiler that he felt the draft minutes should not be posted on the web until they are finalized, Dr. Seiler checked with the Attorney General's office about the question. He was informed that there was a new open meeting act. The open meeting act states the minutes are required to be available to the public within 10 days but they do not need to be posted on the web. The draft minutes will be emailed to the Board within 10 days. If there is request to read the draft minutes, a copy will be provided.

9. Hands and Voices and NeAD Project

Dr. Seiler reported that NCDHH has been invited to join Hands and Voices and the Nebraska Association of the Deaf in developing a way for new parents of deaf and hard of hearing children to meet seasoned parents. The first activity to be held this summer will be a reading project for children that are Deaf or hard of hearing.

G. Chairpersons Report

1. Executive Director's Annual Evaluation: Executive Session

Dr. Lomicky made a motion to close the session at 11:15. Mr. Manning seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Mr. Manning made a motion to re-open the meeting at 12:45. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion

Results of the closed session.

a. Dr. Meester made a motion to increase Dr. Seiler's pay 3% effective July 1, 2012, which is within the State's Legislative suggestions recently made. Ms. Muelleman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

b. Executive Director's Time Sheet

The Executive Director must submit his time sheets via email to the entire board for their review and information. It is an automatic approval unless a question or concern is raised by a Commission Board member. **Dr. Meester made a motion that the Executive Director's time sheet be submitted via email to the entire board for review and information. Ms. Muelleman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

c. Leave Authorization

The Executive Director's leave taking is pre-approved the Commission Board. The Executive Director must inform the board of any leaves of three or more days. Leaves of three or more days includes but is not limited to the following: work-related activities away from the office, vacations, extended sick leaves (i.e., surgery) and the like. In addition, the Executive Director must inform the Board Chairperson of any short term leaves such as shortened days or sick leave of one or two days.

Dr. Lomicky made a motion to approve the leave authorization. Dr. Moore seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

d. Travel Authorization

All travels for Nebraska and Council Bluffs, Iowa for NCDHH staff is approved. All other travels need prior approval by the Executive Director. For the Executive Director, the approval is given by the NCDHH Board of Commissioners. **Dr. Moore made a motion to approve the travel authorization. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

e. Executive Director's Expense Sheet

The Chairperson will sign off on the expense sheet documents for the Executive Director's expenses. **Mr. Manning made a motion to approve the Executive Director's expense sheet. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

f. Travel to and from temporary workstations and residence for Executive Director

Ms. Muelleman made a motion to pre-approve the Executive Director's work related travel and expenses, including travel to and from his home and temporary work locations; subject to periodic review by the Chairperson. Dr. Meester seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

2. Recognition and Awards Program

Mr. Delts reported he met with the awards committee. The committee developed a new policy for the employees and board members. Mr. Delts distributed a draft copy of the new policy and a draft of the certificate. The Governor has agreed to sign the certificate for Board members. The IRB members will receive a certificate signed by the Board Chairperson and Executive Director. Dr. Meester asked if the policy had been approved and meets the state guidelines. Ms. Muelleman requested that policies such as this be submitted to the board prior to the meeting so the board has time to review them. Dr. Seiler stated he will review the new policy and submit to the Board for its approval at the September meeting before submitting to State Personnel for their approval prior to proceeding.

J. Subcommittee Discussion

Dr. Seiler stated he has received several applicants for the Interpreter Review Board. He mailed a short questionnaire to the applicants. He will ask the Interpreter Issues Committee to review the applicants. The Full Board will need to approve the individuals chosen to serve on the IRB. **Ms. Muelleman made a motion for the Interpreter Issues Committee to review the applicants and depending on approval of the Full**

Commission Board, pick the persons for the Interpreter Review Board. The Board approval will be done by email vote. Dr. Meester seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

J. New Business

1. Election of officers

Secretary – Mr. Manning nominated Ms. Muelleman. Ms. Muelleman was elected by acclamation.

Vice-Chairperson – Dr. Meester nominated Dr. Moore. Dr. Moore was elected by acclamation.

Chairperson – Dr. Moore nominated Mr. Manning. Mr. Manning was elected by acclamation.

2 Donations and Honorarium Policy

Dr. Seiler provided a new policy for the employee handbook under the gifts section. The policy states, “Occasionally, a staff member including the Executive Director may be offered an honorarium for a speaking assignment, presentation, or other assignments while on duty for the Commission. We do not accept such pay because we are already on duty and thus paid by the State of Nebraska. However, some organizations in some fashion may present such pay without our knowing. These should be considered a donation to the Commission. If so, make sure the check is made out to the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Present the check to the Business Manager. This needs to be done within three business days. The Business Manager will deposit the check and issue a receipt to the organization on record of the check. If the check is made out to you, please return the check and ask that a new one be issued with the Commission’s name on it.”

Mr. Manning made a motion to accept the donation and honorarium policy. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

The next meeting will be held in Lincoln on September 14, 2012 starting at 8:30 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.