

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  
**Full Commission Board Meeting – December 14, 2012 Amended and approved**  
**3/8/2013**  
**Boys Town Lied Learning and Technology Center**  
**425 N 30<sup>th</sup> St, Omaha, NE 68131**

Chairperson Mr. Steven Manning called the meeting to order at 8:41 a.m.

**B. Roll Call**

Members present were Ms. Eileen Dakan, Mr. Dillard Delts, Dr Carol Lomicky, Mr. Steven Manning, Dr. Raymond Meester, Dr. Jan Moore, Ms. Diane Muelleman. Absent were Ms. Amy Kasch and Ms. Sue Petersen. Staff attending were Dr. Peter Seiler, Executive Director, Ms. Lori Burrage, Business Manager, Ms. Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist and Mr. Ben Sparks, Interpreter Program Assistant. Interpreters were Ms. Bethany Koubsky and Mr. Dave Borgaila.

**C. Acceptance of Agenda**

Mr. Manning asked for acceptance of the agenda. Mr. Manning stated the proposed meeting dates for 2013 are incorrect. The correct dates are March 8, June 7, September 13 and December 13, 2013. Mr. Manning asked to add an update on the task force on state certification under I.1. **Dr. Moore made a motion to change the new year meeting dates for 2013 to one day earlier each of the months. Ms. Muelleman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**Dr. Moore made a motion that the report from the interpreter task force be added to the agenda. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**Dr. Lomicky made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Dr. Moore seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**D. Acceptance of Minutes**

**1. Full Commission Meeting 9/14/2012**

Ms. Muelleman asked the board for changes to the minutes. Having heard none, **Ms. Muelleman made a motion to accept the minutes from the previous meeting as presented. Dr. Moore seconded the motion.** Dr. Seiler reminded the board members that the minutes become a legal document and asked that the members read the minutes prior to the next meeting. **Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, abstain; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen absent. Motion passed with five in favor and one abstention.**

Ms. Kasch arrived at 9:00 a.m.

**E. Comments by Ms. Victoria Rasmussen, Client Assistance Program**

Ms. Rasmussen stated she has worked as the Director for the Nebraska Client Assistance Program (CAP) for 30 years. She explained that each state is required to have a CAP program. They also coordinate the hotline for disability services providing statewide information and referral services. The main purpose of the CAP program is to resolve concerns regarding services from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired or the Centers for Independent Living. She gathers information from both the client and agency involved and then reviews the policies and procedures used in the decision making. If the agency decision is appropriate, she works with the individual in working with the agency. If she feels the agency was wrong, she asks the agency to reverse their decision. She doesn't have the authority to tell the agency what to do but she does make a case and most of the time the agency will comply. Concerns in the past have been connected with hiring interpreters, questions on job goals and requests for different counselors. Dr. Meester stated that the brochure doesn't state anything specifically about the deaf. Deaf people do not feel they are disabled so they may not feel that the CAP program would apply to them. Dr. Meester asked if she could help with getting interpreters for the deaf in medical settings. Ms. Rasmussen stated she does not have the authority to make medical providers get interpreters but she can refer the deaf person to someone who can help with that. Mr. Manning asked why VR staff doesn't make the deaf aware of the CAP program. Ms. Rasmussen stated that is not unique to deaf clients; some staff do not like to be challenged so they don't make their clients aware of the program. Mr. Manning asked if there is a requirement for the brochure to be distributed to all clients. Ms. Rasmussen stated she will follow up on that question. She is aware of an orientation packet that was provided in the past. Dr. Seiler asked how deaf and hard of hearing people contact the CAP program. Ms. Rasmussen stated federal law requires that the individual contacts her directly and that can be done through phone calls, emails or regular mail.

**F. Review of web design and addition of signs: Boys Town Staff and Peggy Williams**

Ms. Williams stated she worked with the Women's Center for Advancement (WCA) and Boys Town to make the WCA website accessible using grant funds from the Enrichment Foundation. After completion of that project, she met with Dr. Seiler about doing the same with the Commission's website. She introduced Mr. Roger Harpster from Boys Town who provided a demonstration of the Commission's interpreted website. Several board members expressed their appreciation of the work done.

**G. Business Manager's Report**

**1. General Ledger Report**

Ms. Burrage asked for questions on the general ledger. Dr. Seiler stated there are additional savings due to turnover in staff. He is considering increasing the amount for the Nebraska Educational Television (NET) program which will be on senior citizens

and hearing aids. He will meet with NET on why the cost of the program has doubled from a year ago.

## **H. Executive Director's Report**

### **2. Report of LB 39**

Dr. Seiler reported the legislative committee feels that we need to move forward with this bill to insure the quality of interpreters. He plans to pursue the bill in January with the legislature. He met with Lincoln Public Schools (LPS). The issue was to be discussed by the LPS board last week but he has not heard back from them.

### **3. Update on Letter to DOI**

Dr. Seiler reported on the letter from the Nebraska Department of Insurance (DOI) regarding hearing aid coverage that stated the State of Nebraska will follow the federal government recommendations. Mr. Delts asked if the Commission could work with the Nebraska Speech Language Hearing Association (NSLHA) and write a bill to cover hearing aids and cochlear implants. Dr. Seiler stated with recent staff turnover, he has not had time to work on that.

## **I. Chairperson's Report**

### **1. Update on Task Force on State Certification**

Mr. Manning asked Mr. Ben Sparks to report on the task force meetings regarding a replacement for the Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST) certification. Mr. Sparks stated the committee looked at several testing systems throughout the nation and found that only two have been deemed reliable. Those two tests are the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) and the Board of Evaluators of Interpreters (BEI) which was developed by the State of Texas. The BEI requires an associates degree. The written test is connected with English understanding, not ethics and performance exams. There is 50% pass fail rate. RID requires a bachelors degree to satisfy the English requirements.

Mr. Sparks provided the following task force recommendations: 1) Continue to recognize RID certification as a valid and reliable testing instrument. In the absence of a cost effective and reliable alternate evaluation instrument, the task force also recommends that Nebraska continues to offer the QAST through December 31, 2014, using the last purchased set of tapes. QAST level 4 or 5 interpreters will be grandfathered in. 2) The Commission should consider a formal mentoring program to assist interpreters with national certification.

Dr. Seiler stated the board can accept the task force recommendations or defer the decision for now. Dr. Seiler stated the board has already approved grandfathering in QAST levels 4 and 5 so no action is needed. Dr. Seiler stated the task force made a recommendation to only accept the RID test based on the cost of the BEI which is \$6,000 per year. The Commission is required to collect enough fees to pay for the test. Currently, approximately 10 interpreters take the QAST each year. The estimated cost for interpreters to take the BEI would be \$600 or the Commission could look for grant funds. Dr. Seiler added that the licensing rules and regs will need to be re-opened to remove the QAST language. The Commission has had mentoring programs in the past which were not successful. The State of Iowa also had a mentoring program and it was

not successful. The board agreed that more information is needed regarding options and action to take.

**Mr. Delts made a motion to defer making a decision on what to do with information given by the Interpreter Task Force until all information is given to board members in written form to be studied and any questions answered. Dr. Moore seconded the motion.** Dr. Moore clarified that QAST will be used until 2014 and then either the BEI or RID testing would be used. She suggested collaborating with surrounding states that have a small deaf population and may be facing a similar situation. Dr. Meester asked why RID isn't the only test being considered. Mr. Sparks stated he is unsure about the cost and location of the testing sights for RID. Ms. Dakan asked if the RID is a one-time test. Mr. Sparks stated he is not familiar with all the requirements. They require continuing education units (CEUs) to maintain some of the certifications; the same as with QAST level 4 and 5. Ms. Dakan asked if there is reimbursement program for new interpreters coming into the field. Mr. Sparks stated the Nebraska Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (NeRID) recently established a scholarship to support the development of interpreters. Dr. Lomicky asked if there are enough qualified interpreters currently. Mr. Sparks responded no, and that the number of filled interpreter requests is about 60-65%, down from 90% previously recorded. Dr. Seiler stated currently only state agencies, the courts and law enforcement are required to use licensed interpreters. If LB 39 passes, all interpreters will be required to be licensed. He suggested that without a state testing tool, passing LB 39 should be re-considered. He stated there are no easy solutions; there is more work to be done since each decision has a domino effect. Ms. Dakan stated the task force has more knowledge and would like to defer to their recommendation. **Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, no; Mr. Delts; yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, no; Dr. Moore, yes. Ms. Muelleman, no; Ms. Petersen, absent. Motion passed with five in favor of the motion.**

Dr. Seiler thanked the task force for their work. Ms. Muelleman stated the board needs to allow the task force to make the final decision since they have more knowledge about interpreting. Dr. Moore responded the Board of Directors is appointed by the Governor to make final decisions; the task force does not have that authority.

#### **J. Subcommittee Discussion**

- 1. Executive Committee**
- 2. Legislative Issues Committee**
- 3. Interpreter Issues Committee**
- 4. Education Issues Committee**

No committee discussion. Committee members will be selected in March when new board members have been appointed.

#### **K. Old Business**

- 1. Omaha Staff Positions: Status**

Dr. Seiler stated there were over 100 applicants for the Administrative Assistant, which is a part time temporary position. Dr. Seiler asked if the board wants to proceed to fill the position for six months and then decide if the position will become permanent. There are 37 applicants for the Field Representative position. He will interview six candidates initially. If he is not satisfied with those applicants, he will then expand it to

others. **Mr. Delts made a motion to continue to seek someone to fill the temporary, part-time position of Administrative Assistant at the Omaha office. Dr. Meester seconded the motion.** Ms. Dakan asked why the position is temporary. Dr. Seiler explained the position was reduced to part time and left vacant due to budget cuts. Upon receiving the deaf- blind funding, he requested to fill the position temporarily to see if it is needed. Dr. Seiler feels that it is beneficial to have someone in the office since it is frustrating for people to come to the Omaha office and nobody is there to help them. **Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**2. Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program: Update**

Dr. Seiler reported he is still working on the paperwork and rules for the program.

**L. New Business**

**1. Amendment Language for Awards and Recognition Program**

Mr. Manning stated the board received the amended policy information which needs board approval. **Mr. Delts made a motion to approve the changes made to the language for the awards and recognition program as stated in the board packet to include a new level of recognition. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**2. Goals and Benchmarks**

Dr. Seiler asked for approval of the goals and benchmarks submitted. **Dr. Meester made a motion to accept the goals and benchmarks as written and to be added as our three year plan. Mr. Delts seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, abstain; Ms. Petersen, absent. Motion passed with six votes in favor and one abstention.**

**3. Approval for Beth Ellsworth to attend HLAA Convention**

**Dr. Lomicky made a motion for NCDHH to reimburse Beth Ellsworth for any State approved expenses related to the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Convention in June, 2013. Ms. Muelleman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**4. Approval of Appointments to the TRS Committee**

- 1. Tim Schram**
- 2. Kim Remington**
- 3. Diana McIntosh**

Dr. Seiler stated all three have agreed to re-appointment to the Telecommunication Relay Services (TRS) committee. **Ms. Muelleman made a motion to accept re-appointment of the three members to the TRS committee: Tim Schram, Kim Remington and Diana McIntosh. Dr. Delts seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr.**

**Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**6. Meeting dates for 2013**

**March 8, 2013 – Lincoln**

**June 7, 2013 – North Platte or Omaha**

**September 13, 2013 – Lincoln**

**December 13, 2013 – Omaha**

**Dr. Lomicky made a motion to accept the change in dates for the board meetings in the year 2013. Mr. Delts seconded the motion.** Dr. Moore stated the state basketball tournaments are held in March in Lincoln. Last year the meeting had to be moved since there were no hotel rooms available. Dr. Lomicky suggested having the meeting in Kearney and the board agreed. **Roll call vote: Ms. Dakan, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Kasch, yes; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, absent. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**5. Presentation of Commissioners Service Awards**

Dr. Raymond Meester and Mr. Norman Weverka were presented the Commissioners Service Awards for their special contributions to the Commission, the community and being leaders advocating for the rights of deaf and hard of hearing people.

Past and present board members receiving awards for their service on the board were Dr. Kenya Taylor, Ms. Mary Ann Burke, Ms. Maureen Larsen, Dr. David Rutledge, Ms. Luanna Duennerman, Mr. Clifford Carlson and Ms. Susan Petersen.

**Meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.**