

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  
**Full Commission Meeting - December 10, 2010 – Approved 3/11/2011**  
**Omaha State Office Building, Rm 219, 1313 Farnam, Omaha, NE**  
**8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

Chairperson Mr. Dillard Delts called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

**B. Roll Call**

Members present were Ms. Mary Ann Burke, Mr. Cliff Carlson, Mr. Dillard Delts, Mr. Steven Manning, Dr. Raymond Meester, Ms. Dianne Muelleman, Ms. Susan Petersen, Dr. David Rutledge. Absent was Dr. Jan Moore. Staff attending Dr. Peter Seiler, Executive Director, Ms. Lori Burrage, Business Manager. Interpreters were Ms. Cathy Mann-Christiansen and Mr. David Borgaila.

**C. Acceptance of the Agenda**

Mr. Delts asked for acceptance of the agenda. Dr. Seiler asked to add a report, F.5., Enrichment Foundation Grant application. Mr. Delts asked to add G.2., Discussion on Sign Language Interpreters for Board meetings. **Mr. Carlson made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Ms. Muelleman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, absent; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**D. Acceptance of the Minutes**

**1. Full Commission Meeting – August 13, 2010**

Mr. Delts asked for changes or additions to the minutes. **Ms. Muelleman made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Mr. Manning seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, absent; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**E. Business Managers Report**

**1. General Ledger Report**

Ms. Burrage asked for questions on the reports presented. Dr. Seiler distributed an article on the budget shortfall from the Lincoln Journal Star dated December 4, 2010. Dr. Seiler has met with several state senators and the DAS budget analyst. Most feel the focus will be on large agencies such as Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, and Medicaid funding but there is no guarantee all agencies won't receive a 10% reduction. The Commission will continue with the plan submitted which includes leaving three vacant positions unfilled and leaving the Omaha office open at this time. The legislature had set up committees to discuss ways for agencies to streamline their services, however, the Commission was not contacted. Dr. Seiler assumed that his report on how NCDHH had already streamlined was accepted.

**Dr. Jan Moore arrived at 8:41 a.m.**

Dr. Meester stated it appears the Commission continues to be conservative with spending and is under budget in several areas. Ms. Burrage responded the agency has been able to find free advertising in several newspapers and senior citizens publications

statewide which has lowered projected expenditures for printing and postage. The agency is in the process of purchasing computer equipment to replace the current equipment which is about seven years old with no warranty. The State recently entered into new Microsoft agreement which has resulted in delays getting the equipment ordered. There is a TV marketing campaign being developed and will be discussed later in the meeting. Several other projects are on hold until the computer equipment order is complete.

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

Dr. Seiler stated Ms. Peggy Williams and Mr. Ben Sparks will be presenting on the NET program and the TV marketing campaign. Both arrived at 9:20 a.m.

##### **1. Report on KIM Foundation, Radio Station talk show**

Dr. Seiler reported that he, Ms. Peggy Williams and Dr. Tom Haley participated in a radio talk show in Omaha on October 19, 2010. Approximately 50,000 people receive the broadcast and a CD of the radio show is available. Ms. Williams discussed mental health needs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Dr. Haley discussed how people with hearing loss are treated and barriers they face. These include access issues and mental health providers refusing to pay for interpreters. Deaf and Hard of Hearing children are being placed in schools that are not appropriate which leads to emotional distress. There are not enough counselors for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. Mr. Carlson stated he has worked with the KIM Foundation in the past. Ms. Dianne Waggner relayed to Mr. Carlson how remarkable both Dr. Seiler and Ms. Williams were. Ms. Waggner is interested in having them both back to continue with this topic. Gaining access for adolescents is a main initiative for Ms. Waggner.

##### **2. Report on efforts on establish a marketing campaign to promote our services.**

Dr. Seiler introduced Mr. Ben Sparks, who has been working on marketing and TV ads. Mr. Sparks is working with KOLN/KGIN, Channel 10/11, in Lincoln to produce a 15 second spot and developing a broadcast schedule with 24 spots per month for six months. There will be no cost for the production and the Commission can distribute it to other TV stations for broadcasting and for posting on our website. Channel 10/11 covers a majority of the state but does not include Omaha or the Panhandle. Mr. Sparks contacted KDUH in Scottsbluff. That station will air the ad in the Panhandle for a reasonable cost. KETV, Channel 7, in Omaha has the most viewers in that area but is the most expensive. Dr. Moore suggested contacting NTV in Kearney. Ms. Muelleman, stated she knows Ms. Julie Randby who works for Channel 7 and is willing to talk with her.

Mr. Sparks stated he has contacted all the Aging offices statewide and they are willing to work with the Commission to get our materials to their clientele. Ms. Muelleman asked if all audiologists in the state have been contacted. Mr. Sparks responded that an advertising spot has been purchased in the Nebraska Speech Language Hearing Association (NSLHA) newsletter. Dr. Moore stated Dr. Donita Mains has attended NSLHA conventions and works well with the organization.

**3 Report on collaborative efforts with Nebraska Educational Television (NET TV) to produce a program on hearing loss in the military personnel returning from military actions.**

**5. Report on Enrichment Foundation Grant and CLAS Grant**

Dr. Seiler introduced Ms. Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist. Ms. Williams reported on four projects she is working on. A workshop, "Delivery of Health Care Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Medical Setting", will be held in Lincoln on April 22, 2011, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon to provide training to medical and behavioral health specialists. The workshop will be funded by a CLAS Coalition/Region V grant. BryanLGH Medical Center is co-sponsoring the workshop and will provide the meeting room and refreshments. The room can hold 200 people. CEUs will be offered by BryanLGH. Workshop presenters include Ms. Dianne DeLair, an attorney with Nebraska Advocacy Services, Ms. Barbara Woodhead, a private practice interpreter and Dr. Peter Seiler. Ms. DeLair will address ADA issues in the medical setting. Ms. Woodhead will address the use of sign language interpreters in medical settings. Dr. Seiler will address culturally appropriate services for people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. A mailing will go out in February to nurses, physicians and behavioral health providers statewide.

Ms. Williams is working with Nebraska Educational Television (NET) to develop a program to be broadcast on NET, "Appreciative Inquiry on Effectively Treating Acoustic Trauma in the Military". The program will address the stigmas associated with hearing loss and educate those returning from war about the resources available to them. There is an estimated 56,000 veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with hearing loss. Other organizations involved include Veterans Services, Public Affairs/Veterans Administration, Offutt, Transitional Services and the Nebraska National Guard. The tentative broadcast date is March 31, 2011. Dr. Ron Lybarger will do a 20 – 30 minute presentation on vicarious trauma, post traumatic stress disorder and hearing loss. There will be another 30 minute segment consisting of a panel discussion including Dr. Seiler, Dr. Lybarger, VA staff, and a young veteran along with a family member. One veteran has expressed interest but has not returned phone calls.

Dr. Rutledge stated it is very important that veterans understand they deserve the very best treatment. The military is reluctant to accept responsibility for hearing loss suffered as a result of serving in the war. Dr. Rutledge asked if returning veterans will jeopardize their positions if they are found to have a hearing loss. Ms. Williams stated the National Guard has requested help in setting up a support group in Lincoln. Dr. Seiler stated that because of tensions with other countries, military action will probably be an ongoing situation. Dr. Seiler agreed it is very important that veterans understand they have resources for assistance. Mr. Carlson stated this program is a very safe place to go for assistance since veterans do not want to jeopardize their positions. Anyone firing heavy artillery suffers a hearing loss whether or not they admit it and it is life changing. Dr. Moore stated the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) is currently in discussion on how to accommodate students returning from the war suffering from head trauma and suggested information be sent to the University system. Ms. Williams stated the NET program will be shown continually for six months.

Ms. Williams submitted another grant request to the Enrichment Foundation on December 1<sup>st</sup>, but won't know until January, 2011, if the grant will be received. If approved, the grant will focus on training for behavioral health professionals. Dr. Ron Lybarger, Dr. Tom Haley and Dr. James Haley will address appropriate assessments and the use of sign language interpreters.

The 2010 Enrichment Foundation grant ended on December 1, 2010. The Foundation has approved for the Commission to use the remaining funds instead of returning it to the Foundation. The funds will be used to get the Omaha YWCA website interpreted and captioned for equal access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons. Ms. Williams and Mr. Sparks will be working with the YWCA staff to complete this project.

Mr. Carlson stated all these projects will reach a large number of people statewide while using minimal funding.

#### **4. Report on proposed Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill**

Dr. Seiler advised the Board of one change to the bill which removed language permitting interpreters living in bordering states to interpret in Nebraska without a Nebraska license. Interpreters felt that this takes jobs from them. Other professionals such as physicians and teachers cannot practice in the state without a license so why exempt interpreters. Senator Haar, who will introduce the bill, has agreed to remove it. Dr. Seiler has met with Senators and feel they are receptive to the bill. He also met with state agencies such as the Nebraska Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services and felt the meetings were positive. One group, Vocational Rehabilitation, indicated they wanted language to hire anyone, if no licensed interpreter was available. This is a concern because a poor interpreter is worse than no interpreter. He also contacted the Nebraska Hospital Association and Nebraska Medical Association and feels both organizations are comfortable with the bill. The Nebraska Health Care Association which covers nursing homes and assistive living groups has not responded. Nebraska Advocacy Services will send a letter of support. The Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD) will probably support the bill. Dr. Seiler met with the Nebraska Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf (NeRID) president and she sees no reason to oppose it. Nationwide, 40% of the states require licensure or some type of registration for interpreters. Three states are in the process of developing licensure or certification. Mr. Manning asked for clarification on section 4.B., on page eight of the proposed bill. Dr. Seiler stated that this is related to what is commonly referred to as Good Samaritan actions. A person that can sign, but is not a licensed interpreter, can assist with communication in emergency or life threatening situations, until a licensed interpreter arrives. Dr. Seiler clarified that, while Deaf patients have a right to have an interpreter, the Deaf person may not be able to choose the interpreter. There are currently 63 licensed interpreters in the State of Nebraska. Three are QAST certified deaf interpreters (QDI), with one more planning to test.

### **G. Chairperson's Report**

#### **1. Two vacancies on the Board**

Mr. Delts stated Ms. Burke and Dr. Rutledge will be leaving the Board effective January 31, 2011, leaving two vacancies. One opening is for a Deaf representative

and one is for a Hard of Hearing representative. He asked the Board to encourage any interested parties to apply.

## **2. Use of Qualified Interpreters Discussed at the Last Meeting.**

Mr. Delts and Dr. Seiler met after the last board meeting and developed a list of interpreters they feel are qualified to interpret the meetings. All are QAST Level 5 or above, the list will be distributed to the Board members.

## **H. Subcommittee Discussion**

### **2. Legislative Issues Committee**

Dr. Seiler suggested the Legislative Committee meet to develop a strategy to get the licensing bill passed. He suggested involving NeAD and HLAA members in the planning process. Ms. Muelleman volunteered to serve on the committee. She asked if there is a way to identify people or groups that may oppose the bill and meet with them prior to the hearing. Mr. Manning stated it is very important to have a strong network in support of the bill and people need to contact their Senator to get support. Mr. Carlson stated he has attended several hearings, it is very important to have testifiers supporting the bill not to repeat the same thing. There will always be some opposition. Dr. Rutledge suggested having the last testifier leave a lasting impression since the opponents provide the last testimony and that tends to stay in the minds of the Senators. Dr. Seiler feels the most likely opposition might be from the Nebraska Health Care Association.

Ms. Muelleman asked if there is any future legislation being considered after the licensing bill is finished. Dr. Seiler responded that Deaf and Hard of Hearing people have contacted him to get coverage for hearing aids and cochlear implants. Mr. Carlson stated he has worked on legislation previously and it is very difficult to mandate insurance companies to provide coverage. Senators do not want to combine the two and the audiology community views them completely differently. Ms. Muelleman suggested legislation that requires buildings to install loop systems.

## **J. New Business**

### **Proposed Meeting Dates for 2011**

**March 11, 2011 – Lincoln**

**June 10, 2011 – Omaha**

**September 9, 2011 – Lincoln**

**December 9, 2011 - Omaha**

Dr. Meester asked if one of the meetings should be held in western Nebraska as been done in the past, suggesting North Platte or Scottsbluff. Dr. Seiler suggested holding another town hall meeting in Scottsbluff on June 9, 2011 and the Board meeting on June 10, 2011, if funding is available. **Mr. Carlson made motion to accept proposed meeting dates with a final decision on the Scottsbluff travel at the March 11, 2011 meeting. Ms. Petersen seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.**

