

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Full Commission Board Meeting – March 12, 2010 – Approved June 11, 2010
Lincoln Medical Education Partnership Building, Room 4A, Lincoln, NE**

Chairperson Dr. Raymond Meester called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

A. Welcome new board member

Postponed until Ms. Susan Petersen arrives.

B. Roll Call

Members present were Ms. Mary Ann Burke, Mr. Dillard Delts, Ms. Luana Duennerman, Mr. Steven Manning, Dr. Ray Meester, Dr. Jan Moore, Dr. David Rutledge. Members absent were Mr. Clifford Carlson and Ms. Susan Petersen. Staff attending was Dr. Peter Seiler, Executive Director, Ms. Lori Burrage, Business Manager and Mr. Ben Sparks, Interpreter. Second interpreter present was Ms. Kelly Brakenhoff.

C. Acceptance of the Agenda

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

D. Acceptance of the Minutes

1. Full Commission Meeting – December 4, 2009

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

E. Business Manager's Report

Ms. Burrage reported the budget status reports were updated to reflect the budget reductions. Dr. Rutledge stated the reports show that the agency has been frugal in handling the budget.

F. Executive Director's Report

1. Budget Contingency Plan

Dr. Seiler provided an update on the current budget proposal which is a straight across the board cut of two percent for the majority of state agencies. The Forecasting Board meets again in April; some Senators are anticipating a special session to further reduce the budget. The Legislature has asked if agencies have an efficiency or strategic plan.

Ms. Petersen arrived at 8:55 a.m.

The agency needs to review positions, possibly reducing another position to part time and look at a re-organization. Dr. Seiler will review the options submitted in the fall of 2009. Dr. Seiler asked for direction on how to proceed. Discussion followed.

Dr. Rutledge made a motion to give Dr. Seiler authority to proceed with a reorganization plan for the agency with submission to the Executive Committee for approval. The plan will then be submitted to the Full Board for approval. A special Board meeting will be held if necessary. Mr. Manning seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous of favor of the motion.

Dr. Seiler asked for permission to reduce or eliminate a position if necessary. This is in addition to the Administrative Assistant position that will be reduced to part-time and the Public Information Officer position that will not be filled on July 1, 2010. Dr. Seiler feels a part time person is necessary to assist the two Field Representatives in the Omaha office. **Dr. Rutledge made a motion to authorize Dr. Seiler to make staff reductions as he deems necessary. Ms. Duennerman seconded the motion.** Dr. Moore asked if Dr. Seiler is considering making the Scottsbluff position part-time or closing the office all together. Dr. Mains is extremely busy traveling and may need a part time person to assist her if the Scottsbluff office is closed. Dr. Seiler will consider this in preparing his recommendations to the Executive Committee. **Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, yes; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.** Dr. Rutledge made a recommendation for Dr. Seiler to submit the plan to the Board for approval if the decision is to close the Scottsbluff office. Dr. Seiler agreed that he will conduct an email vote from the Full Commission Board if his plan includes closing the Scottsbluff office.

A. Welcome New Board Member

Dr. Meester introduced Ms. Susan Petersen who has been appointed to replace Ms. Maureen Larson. Ms. Petersen is an educator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children at Ralston Public Schools and is involved with many organizations in the Omaha area including the Midwest Heart Connection and is a founding board member of Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Services.

2. Annual Report

Dr. Seiler stated the annual report has been completed and a copy was distributed. The number of people served increased; presentations and booth attendance has increased. Dr. Meester commended Mr. Ben Sparks and Ms. Cindy Woldt for their work on the report. Dr. Rutledge stated there is big discrepancy in the ratio of deaf to hard of hearing people in the western part of the state in the census. Dr. Moore stated the number of hard of hearing people in the state is grossly underestimated. The number of hard of hearing citizens is extremely higher based on her work at the University of Nebraska Kearney. Dr. Seiler stated the plan is to actively increase the numbers but this is a

voluntary census. Not everyone receiving our services fills out the census form. Dr. Moore asked if the 2010 US Census asks about hearing loss. She had identified herself as a disabled person in the past when a census worker came to her home. Dr. Seiler stated the National Association of the Deaf asked the Census Bureau to include that question but it was not.

3. Strategic Three Year Plan

a. Vision and Mission Statements

Dr. Seiler asked the Board to vote on the proposed vision and mission statements. The vision statement was revised as follows: Being a proactive state agency, the Commission works towards building support, cooperation and understanding regardless of hearing ability resulting in fairness and equality for all Nebraskans. **Ms. Duennerman made a motion to accept the vision statement as revised. Ms. Petersen seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote as unanimous in favor of the motion.**

Dr. Moore made a motion to accept the mission statement as presented. Ms. Burke seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

b. Goals and Objectives

Dr. Seiler asked the staff to review the new goals and objectives and provide input on meeting these goals. The goals are not specific to any position; everyone satisfies the goals in some way. The staff has been working on the action plan including start and ending dates; this will be an ongoing process. **Dr. Moore made a motion to accept the goals and objectives as presented. Dr. Rutledge seconded the motion. Ms. Duennerman asked how an agency re-organization would affect the goals. Dr. Seiler stated the goals will remain the same, the way we accomplish the goals may change. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

c. Limitations Caused by Statutes

Dr. Seiler would like to provide workshops on various topics such as the Visiting Nurse Association or living wills to deaf and hard of hearing groups and senior citizens. However, the current statutes do not allow the Commission to pay for interpreters and CART services for these workshops. Dr. Seiler is looking for grant money to provide these types of workshops.

3. Reimbursement of License Renewals and Late Fees

Dr. Seiler stated these fees have been reimbursed for staff interpreters in the past. Ms. McNew was required to pay late fees due to her deployment. **Dr. Moore made a motion to reimburse the license and late fees. Mr. Delts seconded the motion. Ms. Duennerman made a motion to amend the motion to add the reimbursement would be pro-rated and repaid to the agency if employment is terminated prior to the expiration of the license. Ms. Petersen seconded the amended motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

4. Enrichment Foundation Grant – Update

Dr. Seiler reported the Enrichment grant was received in January. The grant will provide workshops for interpreters interpreting in domestic violence situations. A workshop is planned for June 26th, 2010 in Omaha from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Additional workshops will be held for staff at three domestic violence shelters in the Omaha area. Ms. Petersen asked if the June workshop is only for interpreters. Dr. Seiler responded yes.

5. Update on Recommendations to Nebraska Supreme Court

Dr. Seiler was invited to attend a meeting on March 11, 2010 with the Nebraska Supreme Court to discuss the letter he sent regarding court interpreting fees for sign language interpreters. The Nebraska Supreme Court's committee approved the changes and will take it to the entire Supreme Court for their approval.

6. Update on LB 929 and LB 706

Dr. Seiler reported that LB 706 was moved to general file but it is not in select file. Dr. Seiler testified on behalf of the Commission in opposition of LB 929 based on the need to include sign language to the bill. No action has been taken on the bill.

7. Update on Mentoring Interpreters Across Nebraska (MIAN)

Dr. Seiler reported an update on the MIAN grant issues. Dr. Seiler met with the Attorney General's office regarding one protégé receiving scholarship funds with no evidence of being enrolled in the program. The Attorney General's office sent her a letter requesting the information. The protégé responded and at this time the matter is dropped.

G. Chairperson's Report

1. Executive Director's Salary

Dr. Meester reported Governor Heineman requested a salary freeze for all agency, boards and commissions Directors and other top management. Dr. Seiler stated he has discussed this issue with Dr. Meester. Dr. Seiler is fully aware of the budget issues and requested the Board make a decision based on what is in the best interest of the agency. Discussion held. **Dr. Rutledge made a motion to approve a salary freeze for Dr. Seiler and also recognize all his contributions to the agency. Dr. Moore seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, abstain; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Petersen, abstain; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Motion passed with five votes in favor and two abstentions.**

H. Subcommittee Discussion

2. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Issues Committee

Dr. Seiler made a recommendation to close the committee. There is only one person on the Committee and Ms. Duennerman did not want to be the Chairperson. The entire Board serves as liaisons for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. Concerns from the community can be brought to any of the Board members. **Dr. Rutledge made a motion to close the Committee. Ms. Petersen seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, abstain; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Motion passed with six votes in favor and one abstention.**

J. New Business

Dr. Moore reported she applied for a Pepsi Refresh grant to help pay camp fees for the reading program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. She has also applied for a Sertoma grant. Two local Sertoma groups have agreed to sponsor one child each.

Dr. Meester announced that Ms. Duennerman has submitted her resignation from the Board effective March 26, 2010 and thanked her for her service.

Ms. Burke announced the Deaf Women in the Heartland retreat will be held October 8, 2011 in Indianola, Iowa.

K. Next Meeting – June 11, 2010 in Omaha