

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Full Commission Board Meeting – March 9, 2012 – Amended and approved  
6/8/2012**

**Omaha State Office Building, 1313 Farnam, Room 227, Omaha, NE**

Chairperson Mr. Dillard Delts called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m.

**B. Roll Call**

Members present were Mr. Dillard Delts; Dr. Carol Lomicky; Dr. Jan Moore; Ms. Diane Muelleman; Ms. Susan Petersen. Absent were Ms. Amy Kasch, Mr. Steven Manning and Dr. Raymond Meester. Staff attending was Dr. Peter Seiler, Executive Director and Ms. Lori Burrage, Business Manager and Mr. Ben Sparks, Staff Interpreter. Interpreter was Ms. Anne McBride.

Mr. Manning arrived at 8:50 a.m.

**C. Acceptance of Agenda**

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

**D. Acceptance of Minutes**

**1. Full Commission Meeting – 12/9/2011**

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

**Audience Comments**

Dr. Seiler asked the minutes to reflect that Mr. Harry Lee was a visitor. Mr. Lee had no comments.

**E. Business Manager's Report**

**1. General Ledger Report**

No discussion

**F. Executive Director's Report**

**1. Budget Discussion and Budget Plan Approval: June 8, 2012**

Dr. Seiler stated he and Ms. Burrage reviewed the remaining fiscal year expenditures. One item on today's agenda is filling the Omaha position. Other ideas are an increased marketing campaign, updating the lending library items and expanding the equipment demo center in the Omaha office if the position is filled. A task force has

been established to review options for an interpreter assessment to replace QAST. The money for that task force will come from Interpreter Licensing and QAST funds.

Dr. Seiler will prepare a draft of what he plans to ask for in the upcoming budget cycle (FY 2013 – 2015). Dr. Seiler asked the Board to submit any ideas by May 1<sup>st</sup> on the direction the Commission should take. He would like to expand radio, newspaper and senior citizen insert advertising. Attendance at county fairs will be more selective this year so that there is a Field Representative in the office at all times. Dr. Seiler would like to increase staff training on how to conduct booths rather than sitting back and waiting for people to approach the booth for the information.

Mr. Delts asked if having too much carryover money is a bad thing. Dr. Seiler stated the Legislature could reduce our future budget thinking we do not need the money.

### **2. Report on LB 39: Update on language changes and issues: Legislative Issues Committee Report and Affirmation**

Dr. Seiler stated he may have confused people with all the emails. So he wanted to update the board on what happened in a more organized fashion. The Legislative Issues committee met and decided to turn down Lincoln Public School's (LPS) proposal to amend the language. Dr. Seiler did feel that a vote is needed since the Legislative Issues Committee acted on behalf of the Full Board. Mr. Manning asked how a compromise can be made with LPS. Dr. Seiler stated that he plans to contact LPS to discuss LB 39 again to find an agreeable resolution with them. **Dr. Moore made a motion for the Board to approve the action of the Legislative Committee. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, absent; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

### **3. Amended Approval of Travel for Executive Director to National Association of the Deaf Convention**

Dr. Seiler requested an additional day and expenses for attending the NAD convention in July. The National Association of State Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing meeting has been moved to July 2, 2012. **Ms. Muelleman made a motion to accept July 2<sup>nd</sup> as an addition to the NAD convention trip. Dr. Moore seconded the motion.** Dr. Moore asked Dr. Seiler to streamline a year's worth of travel and not take time at a board meeting to approve every trip. Dr. Seiler stated this is the only out of state travel he has planned; all in state and Council Bluffs travel is pre-approved. Dr. Seiler stated he is considering the national Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) convention. **Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, absent; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

### **4. TRS Advisory Committee Members: Approval of Candidates**

#### **a. Tim Schram**

#### **b. Kim Remington**

Dr. Seiler reported two members had terms that expired in January and both have asked to be re-appointed. Mr. Tim Schram represents the Public Service Commission (PSC) and Ms. Kim Remington represents the telephone industry. **Ms. Petersen made a motion to approve the reappointment of Mr. Tim Schram and Ms. Kim Remington to the TRS Committee. Mr. Manning seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, absent; Dr.**

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

#### **5. Update on Task Force for State Interpreter Assessment**

Dr. Seiler reported the task force for finding a replacement for a state interpreter assessment has been established. There are currently nine members, some organizations only selected one representative, some selected two. The request to pay for expenses for the task force has been sent to State Accounting. Several states have some form of quality assurance test but not the same as what Kansas had. BEI from Texas, has been reviewed and it is a very difficult test. It appears that it is more difficult than the national RID test. December 30, 2014 is the completion date since KQAST will end in January, 2015.

#### **Additional Information**

Dr. Seiler attended the Nebraska State Board of Education meeting on Tuesday to observe the discussion and action on amending Policy G-18. He did not plan to comment but the NDE Commissioner and the Chairperson of the State Board of Education asked if he would like to. Dr. Seiler told them our Board was pleased to see that the Commissioner and the State Board of Education are supportive of continuing to recognize ASL as a world language. Dr. Seiler asked the State Board of Education to consider non-traditional certificate for native users of ASL so they can teach in the schools. Dr. Moore stated UNK has a program to get a non-traditional teaching certificate. Ms. Muelleman stated UNO also has a similar program. Mr. Manning clarified that a person who is working in the tech or computer world now could go back for a teaching certificate and teach in the public school system. Dr. Moore responded that this was true. Mr. Manning stated the state of Minnesota doesn't require a certificate; they just look at the experience.

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

#### **1. Reminder: Executive Director's Annual Evaluation: June 8, 2012**

Mr. Delts stated Ms. Burrage will email the evaluation forms to the Board members on May 1<sup>st</sup>. He will need a couple weeks to compile the responses for discussion at the June 8, 2012 meeting. Dr. Seiler stated the handbook states he will provide his accomplishments and activities of the Commission at the beginning of May. On May 15<sup>th</sup>, the Chairperson is to contact Ms. Burrage to mail the forms to the Commissioners. Mr. Delts stated Ms. Burrage should email the forms on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Discussion ensued. It was determined that Dr. Seiler will provide his accomplishments and activities on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Upon receipt of that, Ms. Burrage will email those with the evaluation forms to the Commissioners.

#### **2. Pre-approval of Executive Director's Expense Sheet**

Mr. Delts stated Ms. Burrage wanted the Executive Director's travel expenses to and from his home to be approved. Ms. Burrage clarified this was not her request; it was a recommendation from State Accounting based on the agency handbook travel policy requiring staff to get prior approval before receiving mileage reimbursement to and from their homes. Dr. Seiler is not the only employee that lives outside of their home office base. The concern is that staff could schedule all their meetings at the end of the day and get paid mileage to drive home which normally is not allowed. Mr. Delts stated

he spoke with Dr. Meester who agreed that the director's travel expense should be pre-approved.

**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. Lomicky seconded the motion.** Dr. Moore asked if there was an issue or abuse of this currently. Ms. Burrage stated there is the potential for abuse that is why State Accounting made the recommendation to have a policy. **Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, absent; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.** Dr. Seiler will amend the handbook and add the language as presented.

### **3. Recognition and Awards Program**

Mr. Delts stated this is his pet project. In December, the board approved two awards for Mr. Art Nelson and Ms. Elly Propp. Dr. Seiler had to pay for the frames since the budget does not allow for it. Dr. Seiler clarified there is a recognition and awards program on file with State Personnel covering board members and employees only. Mr. Delts feels everyone serving on the IRB, Mental Health Advisory and TRS committees should be recognized for their service since they are volunteering their time on a committee established by NCDHH Commission Board. Mr. Delts feels strongly that the Board should also recognize the previous director, Ms. Tanya Wendel, who served the Commission for 20 years. Mr. Delts recommended establishing a committee to review the recognition and awards policy that is outdated. He stated that he contacted Ms. Lynda Roesler with State Accounting and Ms. Stacy Dvorak with State Personnel and both indicated the board can pay for awards outside of the current policy. Dr. Seiler stated the TRS committee is under the Public Service Commission not the Commission. State Accounting requested that Dr. Seiler submit a Volunteer Program form to pay travel expenses for the IRB and Mental Health Advisory Committee members. That form is required to pay expenses for committees or volunteer programs that are not specified in our statutes. The statute states committees can be established but does not give the authority to pay expenses. Ms. Burrage noted providing tokens of appreciation can be included on that form to cover certificates, plaques or other similar items according to the DAS Volunteer Program policy. Discussion ensued. Dr. Seiler stated he will contact DAS State Personnel and State Accounting to get clarification since there seems to be some confusion. **Ms. Petersen made a motion to set up a committee to review and upgrade the Recognition and Awards program for board members and committees set up by the Board. Ms. Muelleman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, absent; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.** Committee members will be Mr. Delts, Mr. Manning and Ms. Muelleman.

Mr. Delts asked for a committee to develop a new logo for the Commission. Ms. Muelleman stated there are too many things in the works right now. Dr. Lomicky stated the logo could be improved but agreed there are more important things for the Board to focus on. No action taken.

## **H. Subcommittee Discussion**

### **1. Executive Committee**

2. **Legislative Issues Committee**
3. **Interpreter Issues Committee**
4. **Education Issues Committee**

Mr. Delts stated the Education Issues Committee has not gotten off the ground, asking if the committee was needed. Ms. Petersen stated Mr. Cliff Carlson asked to set it up and then didn't come back to the Board meetings. Dr. Seiler stated he felt there were issues with LPS. Ms. Muelleman felt the issues were interpreter related issues more than educational issues. Dr. Seiler asked to leave the committee since there are educational issues that the board could assist with such as IEP meetings and helping parents understand their rights. It was agreed by the Board that Ms. Sue Petersen would be the chairperson of the Education Issues Committee.

## **I. Old Business**

### **1. Omaha Staff Position**

Dr. Seiler recommended filling the part time Administrative Assistant position on a temporary basis for six months with the possibility of extending this to one year. This will give him time to decide if the position is needed rather than transfer someone from the Lincoln office. The position will assist with answering the phones, greeting visitors, and paperwork for the Omaha Field Reps. If the Deaf Blind grant is received, this position would assist with that as well. No decision has been made on the grant but no other entity from Nebraska applied for the grant. If the position is filled, there would be nominal operating expenses for a computer, phone line and MOVI camera. MOVI is a video conference device that is used between offices. Dr. Seiler would like to rent the conference room next door for the equipment demo center. Dr. Seiler stated it is too crowded in the current location when people come into the office to use the demo equipment. If the position is filled, it will be disruptive for that person. **Mr. Manning made a motion to fill the part time Administrative Assistant to be reviewed on or before September 30, 2012. Dr. Lomicky seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, absent; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

Ms. Muelleman expressed concern about the security of the demo equipment if it is located in the conference room. Dr. Seiler stated the room is locked so he doesn't think it will be an issue. He would like to ask for the door to be relocated into our office and not the outside hallway. Ms. Muelleman asked if there is a way to add shelving and rearrange the current office space. Dr. Seiler stated the current office space isn't wheelchair accessible. If the Field Rep is meeting with clients to demo equipment and he needs to leave the office, he has to walk through their meeting. **Dr. Lomicky made a motion to approve the acquisition of additional office space at the Omaha location to be re-visited by September 30, 2012. Ms. Petersen seconded the motion.** Dr. Moore stated the office space will still be needed regardless if the temporary position continues. Dr. Seiler agreed, but the Board could revisit the issue. **Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, absent; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

### **2. Plans for Board Meeting in North Platte**

Dr. Seiler asked if the Board planned to conduct a town hall meeting on Thursday,

June 7, 2012, similar to the meeting held in Scottsbluff last year. Mr. Delts stated that the town hall meeting seemed successful. Dr. Moore disagreed, stating she felt the meeting was a disaster. People showed up and had no idea what we were there for, elderly people were confused on the use of interpreters and there was no presentation prepared explaining our services and what we had to offer. Dr. Lomicky agreed, stating an elderly couple seated next to her was really frustrated. Dr. Moore stated a Power Point presentation is needed, along with handouts to pass out to people, not just sitting in the back of the room. Dr. Seiler agreed it could have been handled better and more preparation is needed. Dr. Seiler stated he picked the 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. time because elderly people don't like to drive after dark. Dr. Moore stated with the time change, it is light later. Dr. Lomicky asked if the target audience is the elderly. Dr. Seiler stated he was not sure, the audience in North Platte may be different than the audience in Scottsbluff since there are more Deaf people living in Scottsbluff. Dr. Seiler will develop a Power Point presentation, introduce interpreters and explain how to use the interpreters. Dr. Seiler requested the Board members submit other suggestions to him via email prior to the meeting. Town Hall meeting time will be 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Ms. Burrage will contact the members to confirm their attendance and travel arrangements.

#### **Audience Comments**

None

#### **J. New Business**

##### **1. Approval for Travel and Expenses for Ben Sparks**

Dr. Seiler stated that the Interpreter Review Board has recommended that Mr. Ben Sparks attend the Basic National Certified Investigator/Inspector Training (NCIT) in Austin, Texas from May 21 – 23, 2012. Mr. Sparks is required to investigate allegations of impropriety and misuse of position for the sign language interpreters in Nebraska. He has had no training on how to conduct investigations that could hold up in court. Mr. Dave Montgomery from the Interpreter Review Board is the one who recommended the NCIT training. Dr. Seiler is requesting the Board to approve the cost of registration and travel expenses. **Dr. Moore made motion to approve the travel expenses and registration fees for Mr. Sparks to attend the NCIT training program. Ms. Muelleman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Kasch, absent; Dr. Lomicky, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Meester, absent; Dr. Moore, yes; Ms. Muelleman, yes; Ms. Petersen, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

#### **K. Next Meeting June 8, 2012 in North Platte starting at 8:30 a.m.**

Meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.