

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Full Commission Board Meeting – July 17, 2009 – Approved September 18, 2009
Lincoln Medical Education Partnership Building
4600 Valley Road, Room 4A, Lincoln, NE**

Chairperson Dr. Raymond Meester called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

A. Roll Call

Members present were Ms. Mary Ann Burke, Ms. Luana Duennerman, Ms. Maureen Larsen, Mr. Steven Manning, Dr. Jan Moore, Dr. Raymond Meester and Dr. David Rutledge. Members absent were Mr. Dillard Delts and Mr. Cliff Carlson. Staff attending was Dr. Peter Seiler, Executive Director, Ms. Lori Burrage, Business Manager and Ms. Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist. Interpreters were Ms. Lorelei Waldron and Ms. Sharon Sinkler. Ms. Duennerman served as Secretary until Mr. Delts arrived.

B. Acceptance of the Agenda

Dr. Meester asked for acceptance of the agenda. Ms. Duennerman asked to add a report on a workshop for Deaf and hard of hearing children and the Deaf Expo under F. Subcommittee Discussion. **Ms. Larsen made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Ms. Burke seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, absent; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

C. Acceptance of Minutes

1. Full Commission Meeting – February 27, 2009

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

D. Chairperson's Report

1. Director's Travel Expenses

Ms. Burrage provided two options for approving the Executive Director's instate travel expenses. Option one, the Board could appoint a Board member to review and approve the travel expenses on a monthly basis. Option two, the Board could vote to approve all instate travel expenses for the fiscal year. The Business Manager and two Staff Assistants would be responsible for reviewing and processing the expenses in NIS as is currently done. Outstate travel would require Executive Committee approval prior to the travel. **Dr. Rutledge made a motion to approve instate travel expenses for the Executive Director for the fiscal year, 2009-2010. Ms. Larsen seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, absent; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

Mr. Delts arrived at 9:15 a.m. and assumed the Secretary role.

2. Election of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary

Dr. Meester elected Chairperson, Ms. Burke elected Vice Chairperson and Mr. Delts elected Secretary.

3. Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) Advisory Committee

Dr. Seiler thanked Ms. Williams for her service as Interim Director; he has been able to assume the Executive Director position quickly due to the work Ms. Williams did as Interim. Dr. Seiler asked Ms. Williams to report on the TRS Committee. Ms. Williams stated Mr. Norm Weverka was asked to serve on the committee after Ms. Tanya Wendel's retirement. At the meeting Mr. Weverka attended, Mr. Tim Schram and Ms. Kim Remington agreed to continue serving on the committee. The committee chairperson, Ms. Tami Richardson Nelson, has requested a meeting with Dr. Seiler to discuss concerns that the committee was not brought into relay provider contract decision or the logo design. Mr. Delts distributed a report, stating the committee was given a short description of the RFP but the information was not good; he would like to be involved with the meeting. Ms. Duennerman shared her concerns and suggested writing an article explaining all the different relay services. Dr. Seiler recommended voting on the committee members before proceeding with discussion on the other issues. Dr. Seiler stated Ms. Richardson Nelson recommended retaining both committee members. Dr. Rutledge agreed; they have history on the committee and may be able to help resolve some of the other issues. **Ms. Duennerman made a motion to reappoint Mr. Schram and Ms. Remington to the TRS Advisory Committee. Dr. Rutledge seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

Mr. Delts feels the committee needs to know what the Commission expects of them. Dr. Seiler stated Mr. Gene Hand and Mr. Steve Stovall have requested a meeting; discussion items will include the appointment of Sprint and the TRS Committee. Dr. Seiler asked the Board members get their concerns to him and he will present them during the meeting.

E. Executive Director's Report

1. Program Updates

a. Budget Discussion

1. Public Information Officer Position

Dr. Seiler recommended leaving this position unfilled at this time which will allow for additional savings. He would like to look into developing a new Assistant Director position which may include some of the PIO duties.

2. Nebraska Educational Television (NET) Production

Dr. Seiler reported NET approached the Commission to do another hearing loss production. Ms. Williams was asked to report on her meeting with NET. NET would like to have a similar program as last year with a focus on hearing loss in military members returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The previous program was broadcast statewide with a panel of hearing loss specialists, viewers were able to call in with questions for the panelists. The projected cost is \$10,000 to \$15,000.

NET would like to conduct it in conjunction with the Deaf Expo, holding a live production outside of the Expo. Dr. Seiler feels it is a valuable program but there is the funding issue.

Ms. Burrage explained the budget projections presented for the Board's approval. The Commission was able to carryover \$173,663.50 from the previous fiscal year due to staff vacancies and closely monitoring operating expenses. After projecting the July 1st salary increases, health insurance increases and other operating expense increases, the Commission will have a \$48,145.00 cushion. Dr. Seiler recommended to hold on funding any new projects the first year in case there are additional budget reductions. Tax receipts are down but the state believes a special session for further budget reductions can be avoided at this time. Three state agencies have announced staff layoffs; at this time the Commission is able to avoid laying off staff. **Dr. Rutledge made a motion to accept the budget projections as presented. Ms. Duennerman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larson, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Dr. Rutledge yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

b. Activity Report

Dr. Seiler reported Ms. Williams revised the monthly activity report. The previous report tracked 480 minutes per day and was very difficult for the staff to complete. The new report only tracks the activity, not the time spent providing the activity. Mr. Manning stated he felt time spent should be recorded. Dr. Seiler has developed a separate form that will track time spent on activities. The Mental Health activity report has not been finalized since those activities are tracked by behavioral health regions.

c. Goals/Objectives

Dr. Seiler reported Ms. Williams worked on updating the Commission's goals during her interim. **Ms. Larsen made a motion to accept Goal 5. Dr. Rutledge seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

d. Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST)

Dr. Seiler reported that the last State Auditor's report reflected two concerns connected with QAST. There was no specific authority or regulatory authority allowing the Commission to charge for QAST and they wanted to see approval from the Board to charge \$25.00 for the written QAST exam. Dr. Seiler feels there is implied authority but will explore adding language to the licensing bill requesting authority to charge for QAST exams and requested the Board approve the \$25.00 written exam fee. **Mr. Manning made a motion to approve charging \$25.00 for the QAST written exam and to proceed with getting statutory authority to charge for QAST. Dr. Moore seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

e. Electronic Board Meeting Information

Dr. Seiler reported a shared drive could be set up for board members to access board meeting packets, meeting minutes and other pertinent information which could save on printing and postage. **Dr. Rutledge made a motion to establish an**

electronic format for board meeting information. Ms. Duennerman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

f. NCDHH Deaf Interpreter

Dr. Seiler reported Mr. Norman Weverka recently received his license as a Deaf Interpreter. He is one of two licensed intermediary interpreters in Nebraska. Dr. Seiler requested a revision to the NCDHH interpreter fee schedule to include Deaf Interpreters. This would allow Mr. Weverka to interpret during work hours; the Commission would bill for his services the same as when hearing NCDHH staff provides outside interpreter services. Mr. Weverka is currently using vacation time to interpret in the court system. Ms. Larsen stated the Commission's rates need to coincide with what the courts will pay. Dr. Seiler responded the Board needs to decide a rate; Ms. Larsen can present the fee schedule to the courts to increase their rates if necessary. Ms. Larsen stated the courts will not increase their rates and there is a shortage of money due to the number of Spanish interpreters. Dr. Seiler responded if the courts won't pay the rate, the Commission will not provide the service but Mr. Weverka can opt to continue to use his vacation time to provide the service. As with requests for a hearing interpreter, the Commission will not send a Deaf Interpreter until other resources are exhausted. Dr. Seiler recommended including Deaf Interpreters at the QAST Level 5 which is \$45 to \$50 per hour. Discussion. **Ms. Larsen made a motion to add QAST DI under QAST Level 5/5 and RID CDI under RID CI/CT CSC or TC/IC on the interpreter fee schedule. Dr. Rutledge seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carlson, absent; Mr. Delts, yes; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Larsen, yes; Mr. Manning, yes; Dr. Moore, yes; Dr. Rutledge, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

Dr. Seiler stated there was recent difficulty getting an interpreter for a staff meeting. All Lincoln and Omaha interpreters were contacted; the interpreters either did not accept the job or did not respond. The only interpreter available was his wife or the meeting would have to be cancelled. Dr. Seiler requested approval from the Board to contract with his wife as an independent interpreter when no other interpreters are available for non sensitive Commission meetings to avoid having to cancel the meetings. Mr. Delts and Ms. Burke stated they feel it is not a problem. Ms. Burrage stated she will maintain documentation with the contract to show all other interpreters were contacted, rejected the job or did not respond to the referral. Ms. Larsen feels the interpreter community will view this as favoritism no matter how much documentation there is. Dr. Seiler stated that is why he brought it to the Board. Dr. Rutledge questioned if it is reasonable to cancel meetings if Ms. Seiler is available. Ms. Duennerman made a recommendation to allow the Commission to contract with Ms. Seiler when other interpreters are not available. No opposition was noted and no further discussion took place.

Ms. Larsen left the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

2. Licensing

a. Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2009

Ms. Williams reported there were no meeting minutes due to lack of a quorum. The next Review Board meeting is scheduled for July 27th from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Lincoln.

b. LB 310 Interpreter Legislation

Dr. Seiler stated he will schedule a meeting with the Legislative Committee to work on adding the QAST language and to expand licensing to include other settings.

3. Business Manager's Report

a. General Ledger

b. Board Member Expense Reimbursement

Ms. Burrage reported LB 533 and LB 167 will affect Board member expense reimbursements. LB 533 requires meal receipts for all expenses equal to or greater than \$5.00 and requires expenses be submitted 60 days from the date of the last expense or the employee will not be reimbursed. The Commission will continue to require detailed receipts for all meal reimbursements. LB 167 requires direct deposit for all payroll and expense reimbursements for staff and Board members. Staff and Board members that do not complete the direct deposit forms will get their reimbursements through issuance of a US Bank check card.

F. Subcommittee Discussion

Ms. Duennerman reported she attended a workshop for parents of Deaf and hard of hearing children in Aurora. Topics included the education of Deaf and hard of hearing children, how to overcome bullying and videophone compatibility with 911 services. Ms. Duennerman would like to see a workshop on bullying in school.

Ms. Duennerman talked with Mr. Joel Barish from DeafNation. Mr. Barish would like to have another Deaf Expo in March or April, 2010 in Omaha. Ms. Duennerman informed Mr. Barish the Commission did not receive funding to assist with the Expo. Ms. Duennerman asked for a correction on the goals to reflect there were only three people on the Expo Steering Committee since Ms. Tami Richardson Nelson and Mr. Art Nelson backed out of the project. Ms. Cheri Roberts from Hastings, the Iowa School for the Deaf and Omaha Hearing Loss Association also assisted. Ms. Burke asked if the Expo could be changed to 2011 for budget purposes. Ms. Duennerman responded DeafNation determines the dates and the money will come from them, not the NCDHH budget.

Subcommittee discussion was to eliminate the Goals Committee.

Ms. Larsen returned at 1:58 p.m.

I. Announcements

Ms. Williams reported she received pictures from Ms. Dala McNew, Interpreter Program Assistant who is on active military duty. There will be an article in the next newsletter.

Next Meeting Dates

September 18, 2009 in Kearney at 8:30 a.m.

December 4, 2009 in Omaha at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

