

**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
142nd Quarterly Commission Meeting  
July 25th, 2014  
Frankfort, Kentucky**

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. David Beach, Mr. John Horsley, Mr. David Bayersdorfer, Ms. Becky Crawford, Ms. Barbie Harris, Ms. Sharon White, Ms. Jeannie Taylor, Ms. Liz Agro, Ms. Holly O'Mary and Janine Dewey (proxy for Michelle Niehaus)
- MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ms. Amy Hatzel, Ms. Becky Bush, Ms. Edie Ryan, and Ms. Kelly Daniels
- STAFF PRESENT:** Ms. Virginia Moore, Mr. Blake Noland, and Ms. Rowena Holloway
- COMMUNICATION FACILITATORS:** Ms. Rachel Morgan, Ms. Rachel Rodgers, and Ms. Tracy Lundergan
- VISITORS:** Ms. Rebecca Horsley, Mr. Ron Haynes, Ms. Jean Haynes, Mr. Archie Harris

Mr. David Bayersdorfer, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:15pm. Ms. Sharon White, Secretary, called roll and welcomed everyone to the 142nd Quarterly Commission Meeting. As a quorum was present, the meeting continued.

Board members reviewed the minutes from the 141st Commission meeting and approved the revisions with some grammatical corrections that will be submitted to Mr. Noland.

**MR. BAYERSDORFER (Ms. Jeannie Taylor) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE 141<sup>st</sup> QUARTERLY COMMISSION MEETING WITH CORRECTIONS. THE MOTION PASSED.**

**REPORTS**

**Executive Board:**

Due to Ms. Amy Hatzel's absence, the review of the evaluation for the Executive Director, Ms. Virginia Moore, will be rescheduled. Mr. Bayersdorfer briefly reviewed a few points of discussion from the Executive Board minutes, which will be discussed in depth later in this meeting.

**MS. JANINE DEWEY (Ms. Taylor) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES. THE MOTION PASSED.**

**Agency:**

Ms. Virginia Moore welcomed everyone to the meeting and distributed the new commissioner's business cards to members and encouraged them to utilize the cards as much as possible so the agency can track how consumers get information about KCDHH.

Ms. Moore was asked by the Education Cabinet to submit our agency's 2015 legislative agenda and point out any new goals for 2015. Education continues to be on that agenda, and we have managed to schedule a meeting with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) on August 4, with members that do seem to be appropriate to our continued desire to ensure that hearing evaluations are done on students appropriately. The Board will be updated on the results of that meeting.

Ms. Moore discussed the fact that the Office of Budget staff questioned all agencies in mid-June about funds remaining in accounts, including restricted funds. The forecast for balancing the FY 13-14 budget (by June 30) was not good and they were questioning why we had funds remaining in our Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) restricted account. We submitted justification that those funds were already allocated for payment of telecommunications equipment ordered for TAP during May; in fact some of those approved applicants had to be placed on a waiting list due to the exhaustion of funds. With the addition of iPads to the TAP the amount of requests has increased overwhelmingly and many of those are first time applicants, so they receive priority. The justification was approved and we were able to utilize the restricted funds for TAP equipment rather than losing them to balance the general fund deficit. The agency may experience future budget cuts across the board if funds do not match anticipated collections throughout the state during the FY 14-15 and we continue to be diligent in monitoring expenditures for the agency's overall budget.

Ms. Moore reported that during this last quarter, one of the Information Coordinators for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing resigned to take a position as the Executive Director of the Missouri Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. That agency is organized differently than Kentucky's, but assistance in promoting new programs was offered and we may be working with them in the future to expand their operations. KCDHH really is a leader in Commissions throughout the country. The vacancy was posted through Personnel and board members are encouraged to inform anyone who would be interested in the position to apply. We have also discussed with Personnel, the possibility of raising the agency's cap to add an additional position.

KCDHH has been working with staff from the First Steps program for many years to work out a better system of identifying and serving children zero to three years of age. The Regional Outreach Director is working in conjunction with the Statewide Educational Resource Center on Deafness (SERCD) and has been approved to work with First Steps as a provider. This will allow experienced counselors to work with children (0-3) identified with a hearing loss, and their parents, to ensure they are provided with all options available to encourage the child's communication needs are met.

The KCDHH Information Office Supervisor attended the National Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) conference, as a proxy for the Executive Director. HLAA is encouraging the use of loop systems across the country, and this concept could be a consideration for the Sport Arena Accessibility study group, to include loop systems in public places to ensure accessibility. The Video Accessibility study group should also encourage the Libraries they are working with, to loop a portion of the library for patron's accessibility. The HLAA conference was beneficial and offered a variety of workshops and networking opportunities and materials were brought back to the office for future reference.

The Executive Director attended the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) Conference and concurrently participated in the National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH) meeting. The NASADHH meeting was a wonderful opportunity for Executive Directors from various state agencies to meet, discuss best practices, and encourage one another regarding their agency goals. The networking opportunities alone are worth the meeting, just to put a face to a name for other Commissions and establish that core foundation for working together to improve our communities at a national level. The NAD conference offered some outstanding workshops as well. Both NAD and NASADHH have agreed to meet next year at the HLAA National Conference in St. Louis to foster a stronger partnership with all three organizations and unite them with their pool of resources.

Ms. Moore updated members about the “*JustBetty Project*” which will promote housing for deaf and hard of hearing consumers, with a focus on senior citizens. Former Commissioner, Ms. Betty Timon has fought tirelessly for years for this specialized public housing, and now has an investment group called Cardinal Capital Management, that is willing to fund and obtain a location for such housing in Kentucky. The housing units will ideally feature: a loop system, flashing doorbells, automatic shutoff for running water, a notification system for any technology such as microwave and conventional ovens and all access features to make the units livable for those with a hearing loss. A meeting with the management company has been set up for August 9 in Northern Kentucky, and the project will be a “go” if a non-profit group will sign on to oversee the process. Hopefully, a group in the Northern Kentucky area will be willing to do this, with support from KCDHH, the Kentucky Association of the Deaf, and Kentucky School for the Deaf Alumni Association, and HLAA all who will be in attendance at the August 9 meeting to discuss the proposal with the executives. Location for the first building complex will be determined after the focus group provides input regarding need and availability of land. A booth will be staffed by Cardinal at DeaFestival to obtain surveys from the community regarding the need and desire for such housing. This project mirrors those in Arizona and Wisconsin, which have been hugely successful. Some discussion pursued regarding rental versus ownership, and low income housing versus regular rentals. Those questions will be answered once the agreement to pursue housing in Kentucky is established, with community backing.

The Governor’s and the Secretary’s Office have established a statewide initiative called Health Kentucky. They requested a draft proposal on how the agency will reach out to the deaf and hard of hearing community to inform them of healthy lifestyle choices, and encourage such amongst our staff. Kentucky is one of the unhealthiest states in the nation and leads the nation in the number of smokers. KCDHH uploaded captioned videos about healthy food, exercise, and what we should all do on a daily basis to improve our overall health and we will be providing Facebook updates on these topics as well. KCDHH has a small workout room for use by staff during lunch and break times, to improve our health.

Ms. Moore proceeded with a report on TAP, explaining the overwhelming amount of applications received since the addition of the iPads effective April 1. Many are first time applicants, and many applications from speech impaired individuals have been received because of the specialized applications installed on the device. TAP began by offering wifi or 3G/4G capabilities, but has since found that many of the recipients did not realize how much the addition of 4G would add to their monthly bill, and they are not utilizing that option. Therefore, effective July 1, only wifi devices are offered, unless there are extenuating

circumstances that can be documented for the need for 3G/4G. Applicants requesting this option must first do the research and understand the cost of the plan with their provider and understand they will be paying that expense monthly. The iPad, like the other wireless devices offered through TAP, are still restricted to those ages 13 or older, even though we see the need for them with younger children, the schools should be providing this accessibility accommodation. TAP equipment is to be utilized for telecommunication purposes, not only to enhance communication. Many other states have been in contact with us since the addition of iPads to our program, and we have been asked to serve on a panel at the upcoming Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Administrators conference in September. The vendor we are working with, Teltex, has launched an iAccessibility website that includes signed and captioned videos on everything from the basic operation of the device, to the complicated use of a particular application installed on the device. They are very customer oriented and work one-on-one with users to ensure the maximum functionality of the equipment for the individual's needs. They are also sponsoring DeaFestival and will provide three training sessions on Friday for individuals that have received an iPad or are considering applying for a device through TAP. Training will be held at the Kentucky Center, same location as DeaFestival, and a flyer is forthcoming with details so spread the word! The TAP annual report is included in the Board's packet of information and was submitted to the Legislative Research Commission on July 1.

DeaFestival is coming together very smoothly. Mr. John Horsley will be exhibiting his work as a new visual artist this year. Mental Health will have a booth and will be demonstrating several apps that can help people deal with stress and other mental health issues. The entertainment this year will be more spread out and everyone should be able to enjoy the performances and see the visual artists and exhibitors. The Children's program will enlighten parents on how their children CAN do anything, with the theme of Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. Each story line will have a moral on how kids can do anything but hear. The SpotLights program will feature prominent performers such as Sean Forbes, Beethoven's Nightmare Band, WaWa Snipe, TL Forsberg, the Anderson Twins, Jeremy Quiroga and many more. With the interaction with WorldFest and 250,000 hearing people, we will be able to educate the public on the diversity and talents of deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Also, the Galt House hotel will have a text system set up for guests that need any kind of assistance while staying for DeaFestival, so contact can be made without face to face or telephone, simply by texting the need to the front desk staff.

Ms. Moore recognized the achievements of two KCDHH staff members: Ms. Jessica Endler on her recent wedding and Ms. Rachel Morgan's graduation from Kentucky State University. Staff continues to meet the challenges of their everyday lives, and we have all been challenged recently, but the work goes on and the community is being served.

## **THE AGENCY REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ**

### **Finance:**

Ms. Moore discussed the agency's overall finance report. Restricted funds are exhausted to meet the needs of the TAP and consumers are on a waiting list for the next fiscal year. The agency's general funds are at zero and the agency's books closed smoothly.

## **THE FINANCE REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

### **The K-12 Educational Study Group:**

Ms. Moore recapped the study group meeting on behalf of its Chair, Ms. Hatzel. Legislative amendments were pursued during the last session, with Senate Bill 32, which Senator Buford introduced. This would have required a separate form to be completed for the hearing test required for each child before entry into the school system. The bill was tabled at the committee level, and due to the controversy with KDE was not heard. Staff worked to schedule a meeting with KDE and a date was set for August 4. If a resolution cannot be reached, another piece of legislation will be prefiled for the 2015 session. The major concern from KDE seems to be the cost to the parents, and the cost within the system to modify or create a new form and revise regulations to reflect its usage. The study group continues to pursue improvements in the education system for all age children.

### **THE K-12 EDUCATIONAL STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

### **Access to Videophones in Public Libraries Study Group:**

Ms. White had no formal report, but states the group plans to follow up by having meetings with the Lexington Public Library to advertise the availability of the videophone there. Libraries in Bowling Green, Louisville, and Northern Kentucky are the next focus areas. Ms. Moore suggested including the possibility of installing loop systems in the libraries during this expansion.

### **THE ACCESS TO VIDEOPHONES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

### **Captioning in Sport Venues Study Group**

Mr. David Bayersdorfer, Chair of the study group, gave an outline of the goals to members for approval. Mr. Tom Musgrave will be the KCDHH staff liaison. For the next three months the study group will recruit members and start researching and identifying the venues in the state, and identify the groups that do have accommodations and how they achieved it, and determine if the manner in which they provide such accommodations is effective for the deaf and hard of hearing community. Within six months the goal is to contact the venues and ask if they provide access via captioning, loop system, and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, and then identify a facility that could be the pilot to demonstrate the ideal process of acquiring and implementing the required technology. For the nine months goal the group will work with the selected venue to implement the pilot program. The long term goal is to foster and develop advocacy and awareness for captioning, interpreters, and loop system accessibility in all sports venues. Mr. Horsley indicated that he sees such barriers not only in sports venues, but everywhere and we need to educate all public facilities, especially hotels, on the requirements for accessibility. Once the sports venues have been addressed on accessible issues, this study group might be expanded or extended to address other facilities. Group members will review the goals for possible modifications.

### **THE CAPTIONING IN SPORT VENUES STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

## OPEN FORUM

Ms. Moore brought up concerns, relayed to her by constituents, about KSD and how their faculty is shifting from teachers who know sign language to teachers who don't use sign language. KSD hired a principal that doesn't sign and they are trying to raise funds to promote sensitivity trainings within the school system. The big issue is that KDE cannot be billed for the sensitivity trainings due to budget cuts, so community partnerships are needed to help fund the trainings. KDE will mandate that the principal and all teachers attend the training. Ms. Harris explained that the superintendent's role is to be knowledgeable of deaf culture, to run the school, to make sure dorm life and the campus is being taken care of, and that the facility is running smoothly. Ever since the superintendent and the advisory board were disbanded the school is losing ground. The Advisory board has been reestablished and will be monitoring the school and working to develop partnerships within the community, as well as KDE. The group is hopeful this is a new beginning for reestablishing the superintendent position at KSD.

Ms. Agro informed the members about the teen retreat weekend called *Individuals Gaining New Ideas to Excel* (IGNITE) Camp, which will happen the weekend of September 26-28 in Lexington, for teens in grades 9-12, thanks to Ms. Niehaus' hard work to get funding to support the camp. Western Kentucky University American Sign Language Studies professors will help promote the camp with counselors and mentors. The camp will be mainly focused on deaf and hard of hearing teens coming together to participate in activities such as rope courses, team building and leadership skills, and personal discussion among the students to foster self-esteem and develop relationships for them to build on regardless of where they move on to in life.

Mr. David Beach informed members that Office for Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) has been approved to purchase bone anchored hearing aids and cochlear implants and has implemented a policy to handle the upkeep of that equipment. Consumers must meet eligibility requirements and show the need for the equipment do their job, training, or demonstrate other work-related needs in order for OVR to purchase the equipment. Also, new non-surgical technology called Sound Bytes is being considered, a type of hearing aid that functions through the users mouth cavity.

Ms. Agro mentioned the upcoming national Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Conference March 8-10, 2015 in Louisville and encouraged members to attend.

## OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Moore reviewed with members the applicants for the Parent Representative position and discussed the recommendation of the Executive Board to appoint Ms. Michelle Haney, from Bowling Green. She is the parent of a teen with a hearing loss, a special education teacher, and is involved in many community activities.

**MS. WHITE (Ms. Harris) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATION FOR PARENT REPRESENTATIVE POSITION. MOTION PASSED.**

Ms. Moore announced that the Governor's Office forwarded a reappointment for Ms. Rebecca Crawford to serve as the AARP board member and Ms. Barbie Harris to serve as one of the KAD positions. Ms. Moore welcomed them back on the Board for another term. Ms. Becky Bush completed her term as Parent representative and was unable to attend today's meeting, but will be mailed a certificate of appreciation for her service to the Board.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Due to Ms. Hatzel's absence, **Ms. Harris (Ms. White) MOVED** to table the letter from the full Board to the KDE until the next Commission meeting.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- VR has a Branch Manager vacancy (Mr. Joe Scott resigned) that will be advertised and filled per Personnel policy.
- The next Executive Board meeting will be held Friday September 12, 1 -3 pm at KCDHH in Frankfort
- The next Town Hall meeting is scheduled for Friday October 24, 6-8 pm in Northern Kentucky. Location TBA.
- The 143rd Quarterly Commission meeting is scheduled for Saturday October 25, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm in Northern Kentucky. Location TBA.
- Turn in travel vouchers to Mr. Noland

**MS. CRAWFORD (Ms. Agro) MOVED TO ADJOURN.** The MOTION PASSED and the meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.