Ms. Amy Hatzel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Ms. Sharon White, Secretary, called roll and welcomed everyone to the 145th Quarterly Commission Meeting. Board members reviewed the minutes from the 144th Commission meeting held January 23, 2014, and with some grammatical corrections the minutes were approved as presented.

**MS. DANIEL (Ms. Taylor) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE 144th QUARTERLY COMMISSION MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED.**

**REPORTS**

**Executive Board:**

Ms. Hatzel summarized the discussions at the Executive Board meeting with minutes contained in the packet. She then proceeded to remind board members of vacancies to be voted on at this time. The first nomination discussed was Ms. Marilyn Fenwick for the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Advisory Board. Ms. Fenwick has previously been involved with the Commission Board and is still very involved with the community and use of assistive technology. She is also willing to serve on the Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS) board.

**MS. DANIEL (Ms. White) motioned to accept Ms. Fenwick to fill the TAP Advisory Board hard of hearing vacancy. The motion passed.**

The discussion moved to the Commission Board Member-at-Large vacancy. The board received four applications, but after discussion nominated Ms. Edie Ryan to continue in this position due to her experience. Other applicants will be considered for future study groups or other opportunities to serve with the Board in special projects.
MS. DANIEL (Ms. Taylor) moved to accept the nomination of Ms. Ryan to fill the Member at Large vacancy. The motion passed.

MS. WHITE (Ms. Taylor) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES. THE MOTION PASSED.

Agency:

Ms. Moore summarized legislation KCDHH has been involved in during the 2015 session, which is detailed in the full report included in today’s packet. Toward the end of the session we began discussions with the Executive Director of the Kentucky Broadband Office (KBO) regarding concerns raised by our constituents utilizing videoconferencing. Some Internet Service Providers (ISP) have begun capping internet usage, or raising the rate plans according to the gigabytes utilized. This is happening because many people utilize broadband for gaming purposes. After speaking with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), who stated they were aware of the concern but actions were not yet planned, a meeting was held at KCDHH with the KBO. We brought to their attention that our consumers are utilizing broadband for telecommunications and emergency notifications and that capping their services was inequitable. The Executive Director expressed great interest and contacted two legislators during the meeting. Another legislator is also interested in helping us pursue a change in this policy within Kentucky during the 2016 legislative session, which would set a precedent nationwide.

KCDHH continues to work with different representatives from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to enforce stricter guidelines on hearing screening for children, both in preschool and in stages throughout their school years. We will be working with a new legislator, Mr. Ralph Alvarado, to join forces on this bill again in 2016.

Ms. Moore announced that Ms. Tashina Crowe is now serving as the Executive Secretary II and liaison for Board members, as well as other duties within the agency. The Information Office Supervisor position stands vacant, but will be posted shortly. We are working on a signed and captioned Vlog explaining how to apply for state jobs, as it is a detailed and complicated process and if not followed exactly the applicant is automatically disqualified. We are consulting with the ADA Coordinator for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and Personnel to make sure it is clear and concise to encourage more deaf or hard of hearing applicants.

KCDHH has also been continuing our work with hospitals and educating them on the difference in Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) and live interpreters, and the patients’ rights to request a live interpreter for some situations. Commissioners commented that they would like to spread this information to other hospitals they are in contact with and Ms. Moore agreed. To assist with this concern, KCDHH is developing a communication card for deaf individuals. The card can be given to physicians or hospital staff indicating that they need a sign language interpreter for communication and providing contacts for such communication access. One member asked that a similar version be developed for hard of hearing individual’s referencing remote captioning options for hospitals or doctor’s offices. Board members are asked to provide feedback on the card(s) once a sample is available for review.
Ms. Moore summarized two events, a Spelling Bee and *Hands Alive*, which staff attended recently. Staff observed that even those these events were directed at deaf and hard of hearing students, and coordinated by professionals aware of hearing loss, that attendees still lacked complete communication access. Captioning was provided by KCDHH for the first time at *Hands Alive* and many of the students were in awe of this means of communication. Board members were reminded to always inquire to event coordinators as to whether complete communication access is being provided at an event and push to ensure resources are provided to encourage full access for all participants.

Board members were given brochures for the newly implemented Statewide Hearing Aid Assistance and Reuse Program (SHARP), which KCDHH worked on with OVR. SHARP provides some funding for the application for hearing aids through the HEAR NOW program, or funding toward refurbished hearing aids. Its limited to $250 but it’s another resource for the many requests for financial assistance we receive.

Ms. Moore discussed the brochure being developed for veterans with a hearing loss called Veterans First. It has been difficult to meet with the Office of Veterans Affairs (OVA) but Mr. Hoskinson advised that he would ensure that a meeting be established to promote this project in partnership with OVA. The number one disability veterans are returning home with is hearing loss/tinnitus and the brochure will provide them with resources for dealing with this disability.

A forum was held at the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) campus with more than 225 people in attendance who voiced their concerns about communication issues on campus, or lack of full communication for deaf students and staff. Topics discussed were Deaf Caucus, KSD Advisory Board, Facilities, Outreach, K-12 Education and Effective Communication. Some attendees were frustrated by their inability to understand the presentations as eye contact and body language did not ensure effective communication. The Supervisor for KSD met with KCDHH staff after the forum to discuss concerns which consumers have voiced to KCDHH recently. Communication issues on campus seem to be derailing the main goal of education, the true focus of the school system. KCDHH continues to work with KSD to advocate for student’s language access and to encourage the hiring of more deaf professionals, or at least individuals who have some knowledge of sign language and Deaf culture.

Board members also discussed the frustrations that hard of hearing students face in mainstream situations where they cannot get accommodations because of hearing qualification requirements. Communication situations change in school environments and every student should be provided with the necessary accommodations to allow them to succeed. KCDHH continues to advocate for improvements in communication access for education at all levels.

After much discussion and education with the Department of Corrections (DOC), regarding provisions of equitable communication and resulting lawsuit, KCDHH is working to improve access for inmates. A monitor from the Obama administration has been assigned to review Kentucky’s system and work to ensure communication access, using KCDHH as a resource.

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is implementing a *World Language and Global Competency Program* for public schools which offer a variety of foreign language
courses. KCDHH is working with KDE to allow American Sign Language (ASL) to be credited as a foreign language for 1-12 grades, but it has yet to be approved. It has been accepted as a foreign language in many universities for some time now, but school systems are not actively making it part of their curriculum. This leads to another issue, in that instructors must have credentials to teach ASL and some have difficulty passing the PRAXIS because of the language barrier. This will hopefully lead to further improvement in that arena with KDE.

THE AGENCY REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Finance:

KCDHH’s budgetary calculations are on track and although we were requested to submit documentation on another budget cut prior to the end of this fiscal year we are hoping to avoid it. If KCDHH does experience a budget cut, this will force us to surrender the 15th position. Otherwise general funds are on track. We were able to successfully obtain one-time additional allotment for the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) from the Finance Department through the Public Service Commission who collects the restricted funds. We anticipate this will allow us to fulfill the current waiting list for equipment prior to the end of FY15. This will also possibly allow us to use general funds that were stringently monitored to purchase a much needed new telephone system for the office. The FY books close June 30, 2015.

THE FINANCE REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Telecommunication Access Program (TAP) Update:

Ms. Moore explained that the TAP report is much more optimistic now that the additional funds have been approved to exhaust the waiting list. With the new fiscal year beginning July 1 we should be back on track with getting equipment out on a more routine basis.

During this time we are also in the process of researching new equipment for the TAP and submitting bids for vendors. We solicited input from the TAP Advisory Board, completed research on new technology, met with vendors who provided demonstrations of their products, tested new products from other vendors and solicited input from other state program coordinators through the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) members’ database. Other state program provided valuable input for selection of equipment to request. Specifications for the equipment desired, including service, warranty and customer service is included in the Request for Bid (RFB) submitted to the Finance department. They in turn advertise the bid and then score vendors on their proposals and make awards to companies that will provide the requested equipment under state regulations. New equipment will be offered in July after the bids are awarded.

THE TAP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

The K-12 Educational Study Group:

Ms. Hatzel updated the Board members on the study group’s accomplishments. The memorandum has been signed by the Statewide Educational Resource Center on Deafness (SERCD), Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) and First Steps personnel. While
they are still in discussion to formulate the plan for services being obtained, the SERCD and First Steps are simultaneously working on a brochure to provide information and awareness to parents of the availability of services for newly identified children with a hearing loss. First Steps individuals that will work with the families are going through training to educate them on how to reach children before they enter the school system. The sooner the child has communication, the sooner they will have language access and greater future success in school.

This study group is asking to be renewed for the next FY and maintains the same goals. We hope to collect more data about how early intervention impacts the community. We also plan to continue pursuing the legislative changes needed to revise the early hearing screening form, and we believe we have legislative support with Senator Alvarado and Senator Guthrie. We will be collecting data to support our request, which must include the fiscal impact changes will have on KDE's budget and the cost for community professionals, physicians and audiologists, as well as the impact on parents required to obtain screening testing. We are also working with the physicians associations to get an idea of how many school systems to the screening already. It has been a bit disheartening to find that there is little consistency between school districts as to whether or not the screening is done effectively. So the group is also working to gather that data for the legislators. Kentucky as a whole is doing well with early intervention compared to other states, but needs to focus on the loss to follow up after the child is identified. It’s critical that the parents get follow up that emphasizes the need for education on options, resources and appropriate services to allow their child to perform at their best capacity. The key to this group’s progress is to form partnerships with agencies that deal with hearing loss and educate them on the critical importance of follow up once a child is identified. Ms. Daniel indicated she was willing to join the study group to bring her experience in working with children under five years identified with a hearing loss that are referred to the Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs (CCSHCN).

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

Access to Videophones in Public Libraries Study Group:

Ms. White reported that the study group has successfully worked with libraries in Louisville, Lexington, Newport and Owensboro to set up videophones for use by the public. They have also worked with other libraries via email giving instructions on how to set up videophones and they are cooperating. Study group members plan to attend a conference held in the spring for libraries statewide and present the idea in PowerPoint format to other library personnel that attend the conference. To accomplish this, the study group needs to continue into the next FY so areas in western and eastern Kentucky can be reached to participate as well.

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

Captioning in Sport Venues Study Group:

Mr. Bayersdorfer had nothing to report at this time, but plans to make more headway if the group is approved to continue in the next FY. The group had to adjust to a liaison change and needs to bring in new members to reenergize the study group.
THE CAPTIONING IN SPORT VENUES STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

OPEN FORUM

Ms. Ryan brought up concerns she has heard from the Deaf community about finding employment and asked what kind of jobs are available now for deaf individuals since printing companies and postal service jobs are no longer available. What kind of medium income jobs can be found that do not require a college degree.

Mr. Hoskinson spoke of how the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 has now been updated 15 years later to the Innovations and Opportunity Act. The new law mandates that individuals with disabilities be provided competitive integrated employment. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is deciphering the lengthy law and regulations and coming up with plans for the Career Centers to incorporate actions into their work with individuals statewide. We need to encourage our consumers to work through these centers as they are now expanding their focus to not only obtaining employment but working with them to ensure advancements in employment for their future, including additional educational opportunities and working with youth in pre-employment programs to ensure their readiness for better jobs. The Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, implemented by the governor mandates boards across the state that are working on sector strategies to form partnerships with the companies and determining the training that's needed to employ individuals. The current “order of selection” is being reviewed and will most likely be changed very soon to incorporate more individuals. Of course progress also depends on budgetary constraints, but big changes are in the works for VR. They also are developing and educational component to prepare students for studies that would lead to employment opportunities. Ms. Moore agreed to do a “coffee chat” vlog to educate our constituents on the upcoming changes and opportunities with VR and encourage a partnership between our agencies to promote the opportunities.

Ms. Harris also voiced her experience from working with students from the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD). How vocational programs are decreasing and students are complaining because they want auto body workshops, or similar opportunities to move directly into employment after graduation, and none are available on campus. KSD is revamping their vocational programs, adding an educational component, so more students will have worldly knowledge of the different types of job opportunities out there for them in the real world.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ms. Hatzel explained that the letter to the Board of Education has been pending for a long time. The K-12 study group is making progress so the letter has been removed from unfinished business as it is no longer needed.

MS. RYAN (Ms. Harris) MOVED TO REMOVE THE LETTER TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FROM UNFINISHED BUSINESS. THE MOTION PASSED.
NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Hatzel opened new business with the voting of proposed study groups for the next fiscal year beginning July 1. The first recommended was the continuation of the captioning in sports venues group. Additional members will be recruited for this group, with goals outlined to make strides in contacting venues and gathering data on accessibility.

**MS. TAYLOR (Ms. Harris) MOVED TO CONTINUE THIS STUDY GROUP WITH EXPANSION OF MEMBERS. THE MOTION PASSED.**

The next study group proposed was the access to videophones in public libraries. The goal set for FY 16 is to reach the eastern and western parts of Kentucky.

**MS. RYAN (Ms. Taylor) MOVED TO CONTINUE THIS STUDY GROUP. THE MOTION PASSED.**

Lastly, was the K-12 study group which will continue to work in partnership with KDE and other entities to enhance the identification of children with a hearing loss and work to provide services and accommodations in the school systems for these children.

**MS. WHITE (Ms. Harris) MOVED TO CONTINUE THIS STUDY GROUP. THE MOTION PASSED.**

The board members reviewed and discussed the proposed calendar of Executive Board and full Board Commission meetings for the remainder of 2015 and 2016. To better accommodate the schedules of some Commissioners, every other meeting will be held on Saturdays. One Town Hall meeting will be held in conjunction with the Commission meeting in October, per the agency By-Laws. Locations will have to be announced (TBA) 30 days prior to the meeting date, as meeting places cannot be confirmed that far in advance. Free locations will be sought in Frankfort, and if not available those meetings may have to be held in Lexington or Louisville.

**Ms. DANIELS (Ms. White) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSED MEETING DATES WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT LOCATIONS WILL BE ANNOUNCED 30 DAYS IN ADVANCE. THE MOTION PASSED.**

The next item under new business is the election of officers. Ms. Ryan asked if the current Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary could explain their duties. Ms. Hatzel started by explaining her role as planning/reviewing the agenda, running the board meetings, working collaboratively with Ms. Moore on this information, occasionally lobbying with legislators, attending various meetings, and providing her with input on topics from time to time. Mr. Bayersdorfer stated that he supports the Chair, if the Chair is unable to attend meetings he takes over, and he stays abreast of the bylaws and parliamentary rules. Ms. White does the roll call for meetings, supports the other two officers, collects the proposals and makes sure the meeting is running in order.

Ms. Daniel nominated Ms. Hatzel for the Chair, and Ms. Hatzel agreed. The ballot was cast and Ms. Hatzel was elected to serve another term as Chair.

Ms. Harris nominated Mr. Bayersdorfer for the Vice Chair, and Mr. Bayersdorfer agreed. The ballot was cast and Mr. Bayersdorfer was elected to serve another term as Vice Chair.
Mr. Bayersdorfer nominated Ms. White for secretary, and Ms. White accepted. The ballot was cast and Ms. White was elected to serve another term as Secretary.

Ms. Moore took a moment to thank everyone for their support and hard work to hold these meetings. She also reminded everyone that one of the Kentucky Association for the Deaf (KAD) seats and the Alexander Graham Bell (A.G. Bell) seat on the Board are up for appointment by the Governor. Board members were encouraged to spread the word to those interested in joining our team and contact Ms. White for the KAD position and contact Ms. Shelby Rutledge for the A.G. Bell nominations. Those organizations submit recommendations to the Governor’s Office and he appoints the individuals and KCDHH is notified.

BOARD OPEN FORUM

Ms. Moore spoke to the fact that KCDHH has been receiving more calls recently asking for assistance with advocacy. The card discussed earlier was reviewed again. Ms. Moore also mentioned that coffee chats on self-advocacy might help the community learn to advocate for themselves. Captioned vlogs will be created on how to interact with hospitals, interpreters, doctor’s offices, etc. Suggestions were also made to bring in KSD students, or mainstream students or both, to do a video skit portraying how to self-advocate in these situations, to empower the young and old alike. Or to use adults which are active in the community and have learned how to advocate, to share that information. Another suggestion was made to present a workshop at a KyRID conference on how to appropriately draw the line between advocating for the deaf and empowering them to advocate for themselves. A comment was made that the coffee chats are very visible on the front page of the KCDHH website and have been effective and successful in distributing information to the community and general public.

Ms. Moore mentioned that KCDHH has worked with the Kentucky Deaf Black Advocates and the Hearing Loss Association of America to post coffee chats regarding the upcoming conferences, to get the word out.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next Executive Board meeting will be held Friday, June 12, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm at KCDHH in Frankfort.
- The 146th Quarterly Commission meeting is scheduled for Friday, July 24, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm at the Transportation Cabinet in Frankfort.

MS. WHITE (Ms. Harris) MOVED TO ADJOURN. The MOTION PASSED and the meeting was adjourned at 4:12 p.m.