

Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
173rd Quarterly Commission Meeting
April 29, 2022
Zoom Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Jeannie Taylor, Mr. Alexander Ansley, Mr. Thomas Evans, Ms. Barbie Harris, Ms. Gerry Gordon-Brown, Ms. Dodie Karr, Ms. Melissa Kelly, Ms. Nancy Perry, Ms. Michelle Niehaus, Ms. Edie Ryan, Ms. Mary Pat Regan, Mr. Eddie Runyon, and Ms. Amy Schilling

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Amy Hatzel, Mr. George “Buzzy” Tunstall IV

STAFF PRESENT: Ms. Virginia Moore and Ms. Cassie Foster

COMMUNICATION FACILITATORS: Ms. Tashina Crowe, Ms. Tracy Lundergan, Ms. Rachel Rogers

Ms. Taylor, in absence of Ms. Hatzel, called the 173rd Quarterly Commission meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Mr. Evans, Secretary, called the roll. After confirming there was a quorum, Ms. Taylor requested that Board members review the minutes from the 172nd Commission Meeting.

MS. HARRIS (Mr. Evans) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE 172nd QUARTERLY COMMISSION MEETING AS WRITTEN. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Taylor requested that members review the minutes from the Executive Board meeting held in March.

Ms. Gordon-Brown (Mr. Evans) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

REPORTS

Executive Board:

Ms. Taylor informed Board members that the Executive Board had discussed expiring terms, the emergency preparedness proposal, language acquisition and hearing screenings, legislation, and DeaFestival.

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Agency:

Ms. Moore began her report by reporting that House Bill 1 passed and will give state employees their first raise in 10 years with an eight-percent increase beginning July 1. She explained that there will also be another raise next year, which will also include a similar raise amount but will be contingent on a Personnel Cabinet study that emphasizes employment environment, merit, locality, and positional impacts.

Ms. Moore reminded Board members that five years ago, Senate Bill 189 was passed allowing deaf and hard of hearing persons to indicate voluntarily their hearing status in the Kentucky vehicle

registration system, which would allow law enforcement officers to see the status during traffic stops. She explained that she has reached out to the Department of Transportation (DOT) to develop some new public relations messages/communications to inform deaf and hard of hearing individuals about this opportunity when they visit their County Clerk's offices. She said there had been three changes in leadership at DOT and she was waiting for them to return her call. When DOT contacted her, they wanted to reopen SB189 to add speech impaired individuals to the list, which she agreed to. However, when it was presented to legislators, it was called communication disorders and deaf and hard of hearing persons was taken out completely. She immediately explained during one of the legislative sessions that KCDHH did not support the new verbiage with deaf and hard of hearing persons removed. It was rewritten with deaf and hard of hearing persons added.

Ms. Moore also reported that Senate Bill 105, Bella's Bill, also passed during this session. She added that SB105 was named after Bella Dawn Streeval, a three-year-old from Adair County, who passed away and was diagnosed with a viral infection at birth, known as cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection. Based on the Center of Disease Control (CDC) statistics, Ms. Moore said Sarah Streeval, Bella's mother, said there was an estimated 270 infants in Kentucky born with CMV. Ms. Moore explained that the passage of this bill aims to test all infants in Kentucky at birth for CMV and to provide educational material to expectant mothers. The Governor signed the bill on April 7.

Ms. Moore also reported that the Kentucky Board of Interpreters (KBI) has been meeting regarding much needed changes to regulations. They were ready to submit the changes when Ms. Moore asked for a policy committee meeting. According to Kentucky Revised Statute (KRS) 309.310 (2), any policy changes were to be given to the policy committee for input prior to their submission to the Legislative Research Commission (LRC). This procedure has not been followed and, as a result, Ms. Moore contacted the new Commissioner of Professional Licensing, Kevin Winstead. Commissioner Winstead was able to eliminate the problem by calling a policy meeting. She added that the committee will meet once two new consumers are added (KRS 309.308 C) by the Professional Licensing Board so that the issue of licensure can be resolved. Ms. Moore explained KBI's licensure was out of compliance with the Registry of Interpreter's (RID) and they would continue to watch it while they are waiting to meet.

Ms. Moore stated that KCDHH did not receive its 15th position, which would have been responsible for billing for interpreters for state government in order to standardize the process. She reported that she explained it to Acting Secretary, Ms. Regan, and was informed that there was no position currently but if there was an extra position in another agency that would not be filled, the position could be moved to KCDHH. This position could ultimately be a cost savings to other agencies.

Ms. Moore also reported she had met with the new Labor Cabinet Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Leslie Tindall, regarding reorganization. Currently, KCDHH falls under the Secretary, then the Governor and she hopes KCDHH remains in this position. She also discussed the 15th position with Ms. Tindall, as well as the job fair, which will be held in conjunction with the Labor Cabinet at DeaFestival. She explained that the KCDHH is now a member of the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet.

Ms. Moore also told the Board all but one KCDHH position was filled, the policy specialist. She explained that Ms. Foster filled the Executive Administrative Secretary position but Ms. Toni Jo Stinson, Administrative Specialist II, would soon be moving to Alabama to be near her daughter

Ms. Moore discussed a new graph that explains all the traffic created by people/users visiting KCDHH's facebook and Instagram social media sites. She explained that it shows the increases when people are actually accessing the information and, as a result, she is anxious to see how this gauges progress.

Ms. Moore told the Board that the official poster and t-shirt for DeaFestival 2022, "The Greatest Deaf Show on Earth," has been created. She added that there will be new performers, including two aerial acts, a fire act, a new storyteller, and new authors. Ms. Sandra Mae Frank, a Kentucky School for the Deaf alum and an actress on the hit show "New Amsterdam" and Wa Wa Snipes of the "Walking Dead" will be returning. The Board also discussed other possible authors and acts that could possibly participate, as well as Pre-Show night.

THE AGENCY REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Finance:

Ms. Moore reported that due to some personnel savings, additional changes to the database were made. She also reported that the TAP budget will be exhausted and, due to the pandemic and war, individuals will continue to be placed on a waiting list to receive equipment. She is hoping it will not affect the budget in the long run. She also explained that the TAP team is receiving a high volume of callers who do not know how to operate the signaler equipment. As a result, she said the TAP staff is looking at other signaler equipment that will be easier to use.

THE FINANCE REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Early Childhood Language Access and Acquisition:

Ms. Moore spoke on behalf of Ms. Hatzel regarding the report for the Early Childhood Language Access and Acquisition Study Group. She explained that Ms. Hatzel believes it is extremely important for the Board to speak up, work with legislators, and take action in moving legislation forward. Ms. Moore added that the group will be setting a meeting with the Commissioner of Education, Dr. Jason Glass.

Ms. Moore also reported that Jefferson County Public Schools may not be renewing their contract with Heuser Hearing & Language Academy. Ms. Moore said that Heuser had been successful in preparing students for first grade and she is assisting Heuser in setting up a meeting with Jefferson County Schools.

Ms. Moore also announced that the study group is working with First Steps regarding their regulations. She said they changed their regulations to include students with a hearing loss in one ear or both are eligible for First Step services. She added that this is a regulatory change that is likely to happen before fall of this year.

Ms. Moore also said that she is still lobbying for hearing screenings and added that Heuser had received monies to start a hearing education and screening program, "Hear More," that will provide hearing screenings and hearing education, and assisting with hearing aids. She also said that KCDHH would serve on an advisory committee for this program. Funding for this program begins July 1.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE ACCESS AND ACQUISITION STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

BOARD OPEN FORUM

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ms. Taylor told Board members there was only one item to discuss under unfinished business—the strategic plan. She reminded Board members that Ms. Moore had asked them during the January meeting to review the strategic plan one more time and be prepared to vote on it during this meeting. Ms. Moore has received no further recommendations or discussions but added that she has added the new cumulative goals and strategies for them to review and see how each goal is progressing.

MS. GORDON-BROWN (MS. HARRIS) MOVED TO APPROVE THE STRATEGIC PLAN. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Moore informed the Board that three Board member's terms will expire: Kentucky Association for the Deaf (KAD), Hearing Loss Association of American (HLAA), and Kentucky Speech-Language-Hearing Association (KSLHA). She explained that names have been submitted to the Governor. Also, she added that on a couple of the positions, she could only get one name for each and the Governor may look outside. Ms. Runyon added she may have someone to serve as the HLAA representative and would reach out to them.

Ms. Taylor also added that the service provider position is open and two candidates have applied: Ms. Melissa Kelly, who already serves on the Board; and Ms. Brooke Montgomery, an attorney who also is a member of Kentucky Hands & Voices. Ms. Taylor asked members to review the candidates and a vote would be taken with the polling done by Ms. Cassie Foster, KCDHH's new Executive Administrative Secretary.

MS. FOSTER INITIATED THE POLLING AND MS. KELLY WAS RE-ELECTED AS SERVICE PROVIDER REPRESENTATIVE.

Ms. Taylor informed the Board they would also need to vote on new study group proposals and ask Ms. Harris to explain her proposal. Ms. Harris explained that it would take a lot of research in reaching out to other states in regards to emergency preparedness for deaf, hard of hearing, or the deaf-blind community. Ms. Taylor added that it would be important to get the perspective of these specific groups: deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, the Governor, and state agency personnel involved in emergency management. Ms. Taylor asked for a motion to accept the study group proposal for Emergency Management and Communication.

MR. EVANS (MS. NIEHAUS) MOVED TO APPROVE THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION STUDY GROUP PROPOSAL. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Discussion was also held on continuing the Language Acquisition Study Group. Ms. Taylor asked for a motion to accept the proposal.

MR. EVANS (MS. GORDON-BROWN) MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONTINUANCE OF THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION STUDY GROUP. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Taylor also informed Board members there were four applications submitted for the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Advisory Board. She explained that the Executive

Board had not reviewed the list of applicants at their March Executive Board meeting but have since reviewed them and recommended that the Board nominate all four. They include Ms. Tammy Curlin (hard of hearing), Mr. Ronnie Campbell (speech impaired), Ms. Shirl Duncan (speech impaired), and Mr. Bradley Green (deaf). Ms. Taylor also added that the KCDHH Board Chair automatically serves on the TAP Advisory Board. Ms. Taylor asked for a motion on accepting the applicants.

MR. EVANS (MS. GORDON-BROWN) MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOUR NEW APPLICANTS FOR THE TAP ADVISORY BOARD. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Evans also informed the Board that a recent bill passed that Kentucky audiologists will no longer have to have a separate hearing aid license, which will begin July 1.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next Executive Board meeting will be held virtual, June 3, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- The 174th Quarterly Commission meeting will be held virtual, July 22, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

MS. HARRIS (MS. RYAN) MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:32 p.m.