

**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  
**174<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Commission Meeting**  
**July 22, 2022, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.**  
**Zoom Meeting**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Amy Hatzel, Ms. Jeannie Taylor, Mr. Thomas Evans, Ms. Barbie Harris, Ms. Nancy Perry, Ms. Michelle Niehaus, Ms. Edie Ryan, Mr. Eddie Runyon, Mr. George Tunstill, and Donna Lawlor (Proxie for Dodie Karr).

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. Alexander Ansley, Ms. Gerry Gordon-Brown, Ms. Dodie Karr, Ms. Melissa Kelly

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ms. Virginia Moore

**COMMUNICATION FACILITATORS:** Ms. Tracy Lundergan, Ms. Rachel Rogers, Ms. Audrey Ruiz

Ms. Hatzel called the 174<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Commission meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Mr. Evans, Secretary, called the roll. After confirming there was a quorum, Ms. Hatzel requested that Board members review the minutes from the 173<sup>rd</sup> Commission Meeting.

**MS. PERRY (MR. TUNSTILL) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE 173<sup>Rd</sup> QUARTERLY COMMISSION MEETING AS WRITTEN. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Hatzel requested that members review the minutes from the Executive Board meeting held in June.

**MS. TAYLOR (MR. RUNYAN) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES WITH FURTHER EXPLANATION GIVEN. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **REPORTS**

### **Executive Board:**

Ms. Hatzel informed Board members that she had no additional information to share from the Executive Board meeting that was not reflected in the minutes.

**THE EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

### **Agency:**

Ms. Moore began her report by explaining the merger of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet (EWDC) with the Labor Cabinet becoming the Education and Labor Cabinet. She explained offices and agencies have been moved and consolidated.

Ms. Moore stated that Ms. Mary Pat Regan, who was acting Secretary for EWDC, was moved to Commissioner of the Public Service Commission, who administers the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) funds. She plans to discuss adding realtime text with Ms. Regan. Ms. Niehaus asked if Ms. Moore could tie in the need for realtime text with a launch of the 988 crisis number and Ms. Moore agreed it would be a perfect opportunity.

Ms. Moore also reported that Heuser Hearing Institute received \$3 million from Legislation, \$1.5 million spent this fiscal year and \$1.5 million to be spent in the next fiscal year to close the education gap. Ms. Moore said she did not know what Heuser would be doing to close the gap. After meeting with Brett Bachmann from Heuser, Ms. Moore said Heuser is putting together a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and will be conducting hearing screenings, hearing aid evaluations, and other procedures in an equipped van. Heuser intends to travel around the state and meeting in specific rural areas that have had limited hearing screenings. They will also meet with school districts. She added that KCDHH is partnering with Heuser, providing packets, surveys, and a fact sheet on self-advocacy. Board members then continued the discussion, contributing more ideas that could contribute to this project.

Ms. Moore said she had conducted several interviews and is waiting on Personnel to approve the document processing specialist position for advertising. She said she is also looking for an administrative secretary.

Ms. Moore shared how pleased she was with staff member, Ms. Jessica Endler Smith, who was accepted into the Emerging Leaders Program. Ms. Moore said Ms. Smith stepped out of her comfort zone to join the group and designed a booklet on hiring deaf employees (included in the Board packets) and worked with Bluegrass Career Centers. As a result, 30 to 40 companies will participate in this year's DeaFestival while interviewing potential employees. Ms. Moore said she was also contacted by Julie Beth Hayden's mother, Ms. Julie Andrews, who wanted to know what she could do to help. Ms. Moore explained the job fair that will be held during DeaFestival. Ms. Andrews wants to be part of this project, which will be called the Julie Beth Hayden Job Fair.

Ms. Moore also added that there are three employees who have completed Americans with Disabilities Act certification. Mr. Evans suggested their ADA certifications be added to the KCDHH website so that individuals with specific questions can contact KCDHH.

Ms. Moore also reported that DeaFestival was in high gear with performers contacted, programs arranged, and press releases disseminated about the event, as well as information regarding the Kentucky School for the Deaf's 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. She said the Festival was still in need of visual artists and asked Board members to let her know if there was someone who may want to attend for the first time and receive a free booth space. Ms. Moore also mentioned that even though COVID numbers had decreased, there would be access to masks for those wanting them.

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

### **Finance:**

Ms. Moore reported the close of the fiscal year was completed with the agency's general funds depleted due to the addition of the new database. She also explained that for the first time in 15 years or so, there was a rollover in TAP funds, due to the lack of outreach and issues with the supply chain. Funds for this program are protected and are permitted to rollover. She said she can ask for a one-time allotment of these funds to be used for TAP.

On the subject of accessing telecommunications, Ms. Moore said that North Carolina's distribution program gives one hearing aid per person. The Board asked her if she could provide a hearing aid through KCDHH's program. North Carolina told her a hearing aid helps a person access telecommunications. Ms. Moore stated she would have to do more investigation into funding to

distribute hearing aids. The Board discussed hearing aids and how a potential distribution program would work in Kentucky, including possible recipients, funding from other sources, costs, TAP equipment lumped together with hearing aids, and potential providers. In order to begin this program, it was noted that there would need to be discussion with the Public Service Commission regarding a funding increase.

Ms. Moore informed the Board members that the new budget reflected the eight percent increase in salary everyone received in July of this year. She explained that for the next fiscal year, other raises, determined by comparing like positions in the public and private sector, would also be implemented.

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

### **Early Childhood Language Access and Acquisition**

Ms. Hatzel reported that the study group met with Dr. Jason Glass, Commissioner of Education, on June 22. Dr. Glass was unable to provide sufficient data for the study group's consideration. Ms. Hatzel subsequently advised the Board that since Heuser was preparing to carry out extensive screenings, Heuser could provide the necessary data over the next two years. Ms. Hatzel then recommended that the study group be suspended until enough relevant data was collected via Heuser.

**MS. TAYLOR (MS. PERRY) MOVED TO ADD AN AMENDMENT TO INCLUDE MS. HATZEL TO SERVE AS A LIAISON TO THE EDUCATION CABINET DURING THE STUDY GROUP SUSPENSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MS. TAYLOR (MS. HARRIS) MADE A MOTION TO SUSPEND THE EARLY CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE ACCESS AND ACQUISITION STUDY GROUP FOR ONE YEAR. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **Emergency Management and Communication Study Group**

Ms. Moore reported that she attended the National Association for State Relay Administrations (NASRA) and Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) and acquired some new models of home emergency equipment. Ms. Moore will work with Ms. Harris and the TAP Coordinator to familiarize staff and clients with this new equipment.

## **BOARD OPEN FORUM**

Mr. Runyon shared with the Board that he had been approached by someone with a service animal that told him that in Kentucky, it is not illegal for someone to fraudulently present their dog as a service dog, leading people to misrepresent untrained pets as service animals. He continued that his constituents feel they are being taking advantage of because legitimate service animals require long and expensive training. Mr. Runyon asks if legislation can be presented to stop this. Ms. Moore said House Bill 403, the prevention of unlawful misrepresentation as an assistance dog, was proposed in the 2022 regular session but never made it any further. Ms. Moore said she will contact the sponsor of the bill.

In other business, Mr. Evans shared that he had been working with a mother who is an interpreter, and her son who has a significant hearing loss and plays recreational sports. They are unable to find an interpreter to suit his needs. The mother has been trying to form a nonprofit to raise money for her son and others experiencing the same issues. Mr. Evans said he reached out to Ms.

Hatzel and Ms. Moore. Ms. Moore said she had encountered this problem before and would involve her three ADA-certified staff members as well as contact interpreters who may be able to help him in northern Kentucky.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Ms. Hatzel asked if anyone had received notice of reappointment to the KCDHH Board. Ms. Evans, Ms. Taylor, and Ms. Kelly were reappointed and received calls from the Governor's office.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **DeaFestival Work Schedule**

Ms. Moore informed the Board she would be sending out emails with specific times she would need volunteers for DeaFestival.

Ms. Lawlor told the Board that Ms. Karr wanted the Board to know that Ms. Ginger Mitchell would be replacing her as Kentucky Association of the Deaf (KAD) President so that Ms. Karr could concentrate on DeaFestival, Kentucky Registry of Interpreter's for the Deaf's (KYRID) birthday, and Kentucky School for the Deaf's (KSD) 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The next Executive Board meeting will be held virtually, September 9, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- The 175<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Commission meeting will be held virtually, October 28, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**MS. TAYLOR (MR. TUNSTILL) MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AND THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:03 P.M.**