

**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  
**177<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Commission Meeting**  
**April 21, 2023**  
**via Videoconference**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Amy Hatzel, Jeannie Taylor, Thomas Evans (via proxy, Lori Travis), Barbie Harris, Eddie Runyon, Michelle Niehaus, Melissa Kelly, Beth Brinly, Marva Johnson, George Tunstall IV, Edie Ryan

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Gerry Gordon-Brown, Dodie Karr, Nancy Perry, Alex Ansley

**STAFF PRESENT:** Virginia Moore (via proxy, Anita Dowd), Justin Stanley, Jayna Oakley

**COMMUNICATION FACILITATORS:** Rachel Rodgers, Theresa Lott, Laura Kogut

**VISITORS:** Anthony Adkins

Board Chair Ms. Hatzel (the Chair) called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm. The Chair called the roll and confirmed that a quorum was present. The Chair then asked members to review the minutes from Executive Board meeting on March 3, 2023 and the 176<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting on January 20, 2023.

**BARBIE HARRIS MOVED AND EDDIE RUNYON SECONDED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 3<sup>RD</sup> AND JANUARY 20<sup>TH</sup> MEETINGS. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **REPORTS**

### **Chair's Report:**

The Chair reported that the Executive Director's evaluation was ongoing and that the deadline for submission of the report had been extended due to Ms. Moore's hospitalization. The Chair noted that she would assist the new chair (Mr. Evans) with this unusual situation during the transition.

The Chair drew the attendees' notice to two action items on the agenda: (1) a vacancy on the board, and (2) a proposed revision of the Board's bylaws. The Chair also announced that she would accept nominations from the floor for Chair and Vice Chair, as well as two at-large members. The Chair also thanked all attendees for serving alongside her for her 13 or 14 years on the Board and said that she looked forward to continuing to serve in whatever capacity she could after leaving office.

## **THE CHAIR'S REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

### **Agency Report:**

Ms. Dowd noted Ms. Moore's absence, and then began her report by announcing that the proposed changes to the KBI regulations had been finished by the working group assigned to that task, and that they were ready to be presented to the full KBI policy committee. The changes were concerned with simplifying the licensure process for new interpreters and updating definitions to bring them in line with national standards.

Ms. Dowd then noted that KCDHH had participated with the Cabinet in the Governor's Broadband Listening Tour in most of the 14 different locations around the state. This was especially important to KCDHH because its constituents rely heavily on broadband service for reliable video communication.

Ms. Dowd also attended the Early Hearing Detection Intervention (EHDI) national conference in Cincinnati in February, where she met two members of the Regional Early Acquisition of Language (REAL) Project based at the Alabama School for the Deaf and Blind and in partnership with Gallaudet University. The REAL Project is charged with distributing grant money to southeastern states to improve EHDI outcomes, and Ms. Dowd was able to secure a meeting with the two representatives in the first week of May. She is optimistic about the prospects for this relationship since REAL has already partnered with the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) on some projects.

Mr. Runyon interjected to say that he spoke with a constituent from eastern Kentucky who was able to attend the Broadband Listening Tour in her area and that she was extremely grateful to be able to communicate easily with the Governor's representatives due to the communication assistance provided by KCDHH. The Chair echoed that sentiment, adding that she had heard similar things in a meeting she attended.

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

### **Finance Report:**

Ms. Dowd reported that the agency is on target for the year according to earlier projections.

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

### **Emergency Management Study Group Report:**

Ms. Harris reported that Blake Campbell is acting as the liaison between the study group and Kentucky Emergency Management (KYEM). The Study Group has a meeting planned in the upcoming weeks with Mr. Campbell and Ms. Dowd, together with KYEM personnel. Ms. Johnson noted that KYRID should be involved in the Study Group and Ms. Harris agreed. Ms. Johnson pointed out that the state was divided into KYRID

districts, which would make it easier for standby interpreters to be assigned in an emergency.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

The Chair then called the attendees' attention to the vacant Commission seat, which is reserved for a parent of a Deaf or Hard of Hearing child. There were two nominees, Jennifer Hughes and Sarah Roof. The Commissioners reviewed both candidates' resumes and then conducted a secret ballot. Sarah Roof was duly elected.

Mr. Runyon, who currently holds the seat reserved for a representative of the AARP, announced that he would not seek reappointment to the position. The Governor is required to make a nomination to fill the vacancy.

The Chair then asked attendees if there were nominations for Commission officers, and asked Ms. Harris to summarize her experience of being on the Executive Board. Ms. Harris said that the position is mainly one of information sharing and helping the agency articulate its future goals. Ms. Taylor interjected that it also requires close work with the Executive Director and close attention to the agency's strategic plan.

The Chair noted that some nominations had already been received via email before the meeting: Melissa Kelly was nominated for and accepted nomination for Secretary, Jeannie Taylor was nominated for and accepted nomination for Vice-Chair, and Tommy Evans was nominated for and accepted nomination for Chair. No further nominations were made from the floor.

**MS. NIEHAUS MOVED AND MR. TUNSTALL IV SECONDED THAT THE NOMINATIONS BE ACCEPTED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Chair then asked Ms. Taylor to explain the proposed bylaw amendment concerning the creation of an Emeritus Board.

Ms. Taylor explained that the Emeritus Board is an advisory position open to former members of the Commission which would serve as mentors to new Commissioners and to continue to utilize the expertise of former Commissioners. Ms. Taylor added that three nominees had been contacted by the Commissioners: Archie Harris, Trish Freeman, and Amy Hatzel. Of those three, Trish Freeman and Amy Hatzel accepted the nominations. The Chair then read the entirety of the proposed amendment.

**MS. NIEHAUS MOVED AND MR. RUNYON SECONDED THAT THE BYLAWS BE AMENDED AS PROPOSED.**

Ms. Ryan opened discussion by asking whether the term for Emeritus Members would be capped at one year, or if they could be re-nominated at the end of their term. The Chair responded that Emeritus Members may be re-nominated indefinitely as long as they remain active in the work of the Commission.

**THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AFTER DISCUSSION.**

Ms. Taylor then pointed out that there were two nominations on the floor for the newly created Emeritus Board and called for a vote, since the Chair had recused herself from this portion of the proceedings.

**MR. RUNYON MOVED AND MR. TUNSTALL IV SECONDED TO ELECT TRISH FREEMAN AND AMY HATZEL AS EMERITUS BOARD MEMBERS. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Taylor thanked the Chair for her dedicated service to the Commission and welcomed her to Emeritus status.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Deputy Secretary Brinly announced that she is serving as the state lead for the Digital Equity Access Plan and that the state work group would be creating partnerships with nonprofits that represent all individuals with disabilities. She hopes that the Commission will assist in making the Deaf/HOH community aware of the opportunity for public comment on this process.
- Ms. Niehaus announced that her agency has received funding to increase their peer support program for Deaf/HOH individuals, and that it is recruiting at least five people who would be interested in being trained for that role. They could be Deaf/HOH, CODA, or people with a Deaf/HOH family member.
- The Chair congratulated Ms. Harris for her work on the KSD 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala.
- The Chair announced that the next Executive Board meeting will be held on June 2, 2023, from 1 – 3 pm. The 178<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting will be held July 21, 2023, from 1 – 4 pm.

**MS. TAYLOR MOVED AND MR. RUNYON SECONDED THAT THE MEETING BE ADJOURNED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Adjourned at 3:05 pm.