

Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
178th Quarterly Commission Meeting
July 21, 2023
Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Frankfort, KY

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tommy Evans, Melissa Kelly, Jeannie Taylor, Gerry Gordon-Brown, Nancy Perry, Trish Freeman, Barbie Harris, Amy Hatzel, Edie Ryan (by proxy, Ms. Hatzel), Michelle Niehaus, Sarah Roof, Eddie Runyon, George Tunstall IV, Beth Brinly, Alexander Ansley

MEMBERS ABSENT: Marva Johnson, Dodie Karr

STAFF PRESENT: Anita Dowd, Jayna Oakley, Blake Campbell, Justin Stanley

COMMUNICATION

FACILITATORS: Rachel Rodgers, Theresa Lott, Tracy Lundergan

VISITORS: Archie Harris

The meeting commenced at 1:05 pm.

EDDIE RUNYON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM THE 177TH COMMISSION MEETING. GERRY GORDON-BROWN SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

JEANNIE TAYLOR MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM THE PRIOR EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING. MICHELLE NIEHAUS SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

REPORTS

Executive Board Report: After introducing Ms. Freeman and Ms. Roof as new Commission members, Mr. Evans introduced the other members of the Executive Board: Ms. Taylor, Ms. Dowd, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Harris, and Ms. Niehaus. Mr. Evans then recognized Mr. Tunstall IV for his service to the Commission and solicited further comments. Ms. Hatzel, Ms. Taylor, and Ms. Harris all echoed Mr. Evans' thanks and appreciations. Mr. Tunstall IV responded by thanking the Commission members for their kind words and expressed his desire to stay involved with the body going forward.

Mr. Evans then announced that Mr. Runyon would be staying on the Commission in an interim capacity until the AARP is able to nominate a successor for him. The AARP representative, Scott Wegenast, has been in contact with various members of the

Executive Board to move the process forward. Barbie Harris will also be serving on an interim basis in her capacity as representative for the Kentucky Association of the Deaf until that organization submits nominations to the Governor's office. Ms. Harris hopes to be reappointed on a permanent basis. Mr. Evans noted that outside groups have not always been proactive in submitting nominations and working with the Commission, and that he would like to find ways to encourage their participation.

Mr. Evans announced that Ms. Dowd had been detailed as Executive Director of KCDHH until a permanent hire is made by the Commission. This would allow her to return to her previous role in the event she is not appointed to the position permanently. The Executive Director search committee consists of Mr. Evans, Rachel Morgan from KCDHH, Ms. Brinly, Ms. Hatzel, Ms. Karr, Ms. Taylor, and Dr. Freeman. Mr. Evans reported that the committee is working to make a hire as soon as possible, and to that end had posted the job description on the official state website as of this morning. Ms. Hatzel noted that the committee is working with Jim Rivard at KCDHH to create avenues for the Deaf community to leave video comments for the committee during the search process. Mr. Runyon suggested having an online town hall meeting for all stakeholders to share their thoughts, and Mr. Evans and Ms. Hatzel agreed that this was a good idea. Ms. Taylor noted that though input from the public is an important part of the process, candidates would be evaluated on their qualifications.

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Agency Report: Ms. Dowd began by thanking the Commission on behalf of KCDHH staff for their help and kindness in the past few months.

Ms. Dowd then announced that there are two vacant positions at KCDHH, and that efforts are actively underway to hire an Executive Administrative Secretary. There have been three applicants in recent weeks, and the process will move forward as soon as the annual budget is settled and Rachel Morgan returns from annual leave.

TAP applications have been caught up and are now current. There have been some issues with equipment suppliers, but those issues are being addressed and new contracts will be examined when Ms. Morgan returns from leave.

KCDHH continues its partnership work with Heuser Hearing Institute in Louisville. This work consists of the TAP department working with Heuser's mobile hearing screenings to connect people with newly identified hearing loss directly to adaptive equipment.

Blake Campbell from KCDHH and Ms. Niehaus have been working with the Community Impact Council to address discrimination in health care settings by presenting at conferences of primary care providers. The long-term goal of this effort is to (1) educate existing providers about access issues, and (2) to recruit and train deaf/deaf-blind/hard of hearing people to be community health workers.

Ms. Dowd noted that she would be recording a continuing education course for the Kentucky Bar Association. The purpose of this course is to make attorneys aware of their obligations under the ADA to DHH clients and potential clients.

Ms. Dowd also plans to meet with the CEO of Kentuckiana Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the CEO of Heuser to encourage them to take DHH children and adults into their programs.

Ms. Dowd will meet with Jeremy Slinker, the Director of Kentucky Emergency Management, to discuss the provision of interpreting services on television during emergency events. This will require an active partnership with the Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (KYRID). The work of increasing accessibility to emergency management information is ongoing between KCDHH and KEM.

Mr. Evans pointed out that the Kentucky State Fair is approaching, and asked Commission members to volunteer to provide information at the Commission's booth. Ms. Dowd continued, noting that the Fair is from August 18-27th.

Finally, Ms. Dowd addressed the Commission's legislative priorities, noting that it may not be appropriate to pursue additional legislation related to the Commission's constituents until after a permanent Executive Director is appointed. Ms. Hatzel asked if it would be helpful to have a mandate from the Commission to pursue legislation, and Ms. Dowd agreed that it would. This subject was then added to New Business.

THE AGENCY REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Finance Report: Ms. Dowd reported that the finance report was in the packet given to Commission members.

THE FINANCE REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Emergency Preparedness Study Group Report: Ms. Harris announced that Commission members should have received the Study Group report via email. Currently, the study group consists of Ms. Harris, Mr. Campbell from KCDHH, and Ms. Taylor. Ms. Harris did note that KSD is beginning to install outdoor warning systems for their students and that she intends to research the practicality of using these systems in other settings. Mr. Runyon and Ms. Perry underscored the need for alerts to the DHH in emergency situations.

THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

NEW BUSINESS: Ms. Roof stated that Ms. Dowd had asked the Commission for guidance in determining whether to pursue legislative priorities before the permanent appointment of an Executive Director. Ms. Niehaus suggested the Deaf Child's Bill of Rights, which has been passed by several other states.

MS. ROOF MOTIONED THAT THE COMMISSION DIRECT MS. DOWD TO PURSUE LEGISLATION IN MEMORY OF VIRGINIA MOORE. MS. HARRIS SECONDED.

Ms. Hatzel asked Ms. Dowd if she was comfortable with moving forward with legislation. Mr. Evans agreed that this was his only concern. Ms. Dowd stated that she is comfortable moving forward and noted that Hands & Voices has produced model legislation that can be used.

MS. PERRY MOVED TO CLOSE DISCUSSION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Evans then noted that the Executive Board had discussed whether to have further meetings in-person or remotely, and asked Commissioners for their opinion on the matter. Mr. Ansley, Ms. Gordon-Brown, Ms. Perry, and Mr. Runyon expressed support for meeting in-person. Ms. Taylor suggested that inclement weather may interfere in future meetings during winter.

MS. NIEHAUS MOVED TO HAVE THE NEXT TWO MEETINGS IN-PERSON AND THE JANUARY MEETING REMOTELY. MS. GORDON-BROWN SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Evans asked Ms. Dowd for an update on the TAP Advisory Board vacancies. Ms. Dowd reported that there were currently three vacancies, but that three applications had already been received. The three applicants are Bobby Moore, Trudi Ross, and Holly O'Malley.

MR. ANSLEY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE THREE APPLICANTS TO THE TAP ADVISORY BOARD. MS. TAYLOR SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Evans then opened the floor to all Commission members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Hatzel relayed a message from Ms. Ryan concerning the use of interpreters at funeral homes. Many funeral homes apparently try to pass the cost of interpreting on to families or third parties. Mr. Runyon said that he has a relative who is a funeral director, and that he would find out when their next professional association meeting was so that the Commission or RID could attend and clarify the obligations the ADA imposes on funeral

homes to provide communication aids. Ms. Dowd added that anyone who knows of consumers who are in this, or similar situations should advise them to contact KCDHH's advocacy department.

Ms. Roof announced that Deaf Awareness Day at the Louisville Zoo is on August 19. Tickets are free for deaf/HOH children up to age 17.

Ms. Harris announced that the K Fund, a foundation to encourage sports participation at KSD, will hold a 5K run in Danville in October. She will share information with the Commission when it becomes available. Ms. Harris also noted that the KSD Alumni Association would have its sports celebration as part of the 200th anniversary on July 28th and 29th.

Mr. Evans announced that the next meeting would be on October 27th from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

MS. HARRIS MOVED TO ADJOURN. MS. PERRY SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. The meeting was adjourned at 4:16 pm.