

Please Note: This is an approved copy of the minutes for the 10/15/08 meeting of the Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

October 15, 2008

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Attending: T. Zellner, E. Rawlings, L. Sack, J. Ronan, A. Knight, and J. Compton.

Staff Attending: S. Florio (Executive Director)

Public Attending: David Hatch

Communication Accommodations:

Interpreters: Carol Fay, Jennifer Maloney, and Jessica Morgan (observer)
CART service: Jennifer Moore

Location: Conference Room A at the Department of Administration building (One Capitol Hill) in Providence, RI

The meeting was called to order by chair Travis Zellner at 6:11 pm.

Lisa Sack made a motion to approve the June 18 2008 meeting minutes as amended. (Changed from "Retreat" to "Orientation"). Travis Zellner seconded the motion to approve minutes. The motion was in favor with 6 votes and carried.

OFFICERS' REPORTS:

Chairperson: 1) Travis encouraged the Commissioners to hold the dates for the commissioners' orientation which will be held on October 29th and November 6th. Someone pointed out that Oct. 29th may not be feasible as many interpreters are already booked for the "Open House" night at the Rhode Island School for the Deaf. Travis requested that Steve is looking at this situation and get back to us as soon as possible.

- 2) Travis explained about the interviewing process for all candidates for the commissioners. He suggested that the interview for the hard of hearing seat should go forward as planned tonight and the interview for the hearing seat should be hold until the new date as one of the candidates is not available to attend. This same candidate was available for an interview on September 17 but it was cancelled due to lack of interpreters.
- 3) Travis made a suggestion to hold the Closed/Executive session until right after the Executive Director's Report. The commissioners were in agreement with him.

Vice-Chairperson: No Report

Treasurer: No Report

Secretary: No Report

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Steven Florio read the Executive Director's report. See packet for details.

- 1) Steven reported that close to 1,300 state employees have retired before Oct. 1st so they can retain the benefit package prior to new change. Therefore, we expect some changes going on in various departments and agencies, structural change or response time due to overworked staff.
- 2) Steven explained more about the orientations that will be held on Oct. 29th at the conference room A at the Department of Administration building and Nov. 6th at the H.E.W. Hearing Room (135) at the State House.
- 3) He reminded the Commissioners that the Coffee Hour event will be held on November 13th instead of Nov. 5th because Nov. 4th is the Election Day.
- 4) He explained what the letter, dated October 7, 2008, sent by J. Michel Martineau, Board Administrator of Health Professionals Regulation in regarding of an interpreter's misconducts was all about.
- 5) He mentioned that the quarterly budget report as of September 30, 2008 is available in the blue folder for their review.
- 6) He wanted to share with the Commissioners that he has developed the Board Manual for the Commissioners. The manual consists all important information that the Commissioners should be aware in order to effectively lead the Commission in the most positive way. He has reviewed the Board manual from the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. He felt that the RICDHH's board manual is probably one of the best!
- 7) He brought up that Chairperson Travis Zellner is recognized for the Excellence in Leadership Award from the Hamilton Relay this year.
- 8) He mentioned briefly that he would like to have different title to promote concerning hard of hearing population in the Spring of 2009. Instead of "Better Hearing and Speech Month", we would consider something like this, "Hard of Hearing Awareness Month". This would create more broad issues to promote rather than just focus on better speech and hearing alone.

CLOSED/EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Andrew Knight made a motion to go into Closed/Executive Session to interview candidates for the commissioner seats. Lisa Sack seconded. The motion passed. The open meeting closed and the Closed/Executive session began at 6:39 pm.

BREAK at 7:30pm for interpreters and CART captioner.

Re-convened at 7:40pm.

The regular meeting was reopened at 7:49 pm. Lisa Sack made a motion to seal the executive session meeting minutes, interviewing candidates. Jack Ronan seconded. The motion passed to seal the Executive Session meeting minute at 7:50pm.

COMMITTEES:

- Bylaws:*
- 1) Ed Rawlings and Lisa Sack said that they will review the voting procedure to see if the procedure needs more clarification for future reference such as conflict of interests between family members and been wondering about potential conflict of interests between mutual friends. Steve was asked to contact the Ethics Commission and/or Office of the Attorney General to find out if there is any law that would consider conflict of interest on mutual friends.
 - 2) They would review newly board manual that was developed by Steve Florio and make recommendations if there is any.

Membership: No report except that they are responsible to collect applications for the vacancy of the commissioner seats.

Hospice: No report. Ed and Steve agreed that they would develop a plan of action for the year of 2009.

Healthcare: Since Suzanne is not here, Steve updated with the Commissioners that the Healthcare committee is still active. The Needs Assessment Report was reviewed and discussed among the Committee members. The committee had a brainstorming session on September 16th led by Barbara Jean "BJ" Wood, former Commissioner for the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This session had created in-depth thoughts for the members about the future actions as to what to do with the Needs Assessment Report.

Awards: Lisa said she would like to contact Lois Thomas and encourage her to be part of this committee. She reported that she has received only one nomination for the RICDHH Recognition Award. She requested that the deadline for nomination is extended to November 6th.

Ad-Hoc: Consolidation Study Group- No report but the commissioners should take this very seriously as it may repeat in the near future. This area needs to be studied and ideas should be given as to what would be best scenario for the RICDHH's existence in the State system.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no item for old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1) Ed Rawlings made a motion to approve the revised budget for Fiscal Year 2009 and the budget request for FY2010 that includes the budget reduction (Emergency Interpreter Referral Service and Communication Access) to satisfy the budget office's target amount. Jim Compton seconded. The motion was in favor with 6 votes and carried.
- 2) Andrew Knight made a motion to approve that the final winner of the RICDHH Recognition 2008 Award is determined by the Awards Committee. Jack Ronan seconded. The motion was in favor with 6 votes and carried.
- 3) Jordan Sack made a motion to approve the RICDHH Legislative package for the 2009 legislative session. (1. Political Ads bought by all candidates, not only candidates who are qualified for state matching, who run for the public offices must be captioned, 2. Any excess fund from the Relay Fund under RI PUC should be transferred to the RICDHH account. This is to be used for Emergency Communication system and public phone for deaf and hard of hearing people, 3. All video clips on any state government sponsored websites must be accessible to deaf and hard of hearing such as captioning or transcript ready for reading, and 4. all educational materials such as DVDs either sold, distributed, or used in the classroom must be either open or closed captioning.) Lisa Sack seconded. The motion was in favor with 6 votes and carried.

PUBLIC TIME:

No one requested for public time. Travis updated with the Commissioners about the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, new building, and new administration team.

Jack Ronan made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Jim Compton seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven A. Florio
Executive Director (Secretary for the October 15, 2008 meeting).