

The RI CDHH Commissioner approved the minutes for the 03/17/2010 meeting on February 16, 2011.

## Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

March 17, 2010

### MEETING MINUTES

*Commissioners Attending:* Travis Zellner, Ed Rawlings, Lisa Lieberman Sack, Christine "Tina" Thompson, James Compton, Jordan Sack, Sean Gill, and Mary Wambach..

*Commissioner(s) not Attending:* Andrew Knight, John Dunsmore, and James Simon

*Staff Attending:* Steve Florio (Executive Director)

*Public Attending:*

*Communication Accommodations:*

*Interpreters:* Elizabeth Nadolski and Carol Fay  
*CART service:* Shelley Deming

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

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The meeting was called to order by Chair Travis Zellner at 6:07 pm.

Chair Travis Zellner announced that three people who notified the RICDHH office that they could not make it tonight were as follows: Andrew Knight, James Simon, and John Dunsmore. Chair Zellner recognized that the quorum is met because 7 commissioners were presented (Mary Wambach came in late, making it 8 commissioners presented).

**Review of Meeting Minutes (1/13/2010):**

- 1) Jordan Sack **made a motion** to approve the **January 13, 2010** meeting minutes as corrected. Ed Rawlings seconded. The motion was carried 6-0. (Only 6 were eligible to vote because they were at the December meeting. Mary Wambach did not vote as she came in later.)

Correction #1: In the 1<sup>st</sup> page under Chairperson's report, the strategic plan is being done by Beth Wilson, not Tina Thompson.

Correction #2: Under healthcare committee, Tina Thompson and Jim Simon are co-chairs.

#### **CHAIR' REPORT:**

Chair Travis Zellner said he was aware of a lot of activities on the legislative part and he was impressed with Steve as to how he had been handling this. He was looking forward to his updates on this one. Also, he asked Steve if he could give the updates on the Strategic Plan.

Steve Florio started off thanking all commissioners for making themselves available on Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup> for the Strategic planning activity. He had been in touch with Beth Wilson and Martin Leek, both 6 Sigma Experts, on a regular basis to ensure that everything goes well for Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup>. The activity will start at 8am and conclude at 5pm. He explained the process and the expectation as to what will happen that day. Steve discussed with the Commissioners about luncheon, snacks, appropriate to wear, etc.

Chair Travis thanked Steve for the updates.

**VICE CHAIR' REPORT:** No Report but I will get involved in the Election procedure later in the meeting.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** No Report

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** No Report

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

- 1) Since the last meeting, the Commission was pretty busy by attending a number of meetings, conferences, and legislative activities.
- 2) **Personnel News:** Pamela Zellner and Paul Barnaby were upbeat about their work and illnesses had hit each of us at the different times but we managed to stay the services afloat.
- 3) **Website Update:** Steve was in the process of transferring the responsibility of website to Pamela Zellner. He was waiting for a staff member from RI.GOV and Department of Information Technology to assist the transition. The software had to be removed from my desktop and to be installed into Pam's desktop. He would let the commissioners when the website is up running again and it will be managed by Pam.
- 4) **Captioning Problem Updates:** Steve learned that Jeanne Panarace noticed that Channel 12 had problem with the quality of captioning. Steve contacted Channel 12 Engineering Department as to what went wrong with the quality of captioning in the last few weeks. They said they found and acknowledged the problem, called, EG 512, the name of a captioning bridge to disseminate captioning. Steve needed to gather more information such as delays, quality, etc., not just from Jeanne, but also from other TV viewers who noticed similar problem. He would contact the Channel 12 TV station to set up a meeting to address this issue as soon as possible. Mary

Wambach asked a question about the emergency breaking news on TV. Steve explained that in that situation, the FCC, the Federal Communications Commission, clearly has regulations and laws that if there is any emergency, the TV, the news, the network is responsible for having captioning. There should be open captioning, not talking about closed captioning. Maybe a summary or some kind of important information is required. If it's a real emergency and doesn't meet FCC requirements, she would need to report that because it is a violation of the law.

- 5) **Commission on Women:** Steve wanted to share bad news about Commission on Women. They discovered that they would get \$0.00 for the Revised FY2010 Budget. Therefore, all staff members were laid off at the end of February. He suggested that the commissioners and staff should keep vigilance on all legislative and budget activities at the State House that may affect the RICDHH. He was not aware of other boards and/or commissions have similar outcome as Commission on Women.
- 6) Steve requested that a new national 501 c3 organization representing all commissions, boards, divisions, and departments serving the deaf and hard of hearing be on the agenda at the next meeting. He said the national organization needs to know if state agencies for the deaf and hard of hearing will support this idea. Chair Travis would make a note of it.
- 7) Steve reported that he plan to meet with U.S. Representative Langevin to discuss H.R. 3101, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Video and Communication Accessibility Act of 2010 on April 18<sup>th</sup> at 3pm at his office in Warwick, RI. . The purpose of this visit is to get his support on this bill. This bill would enhance the internet accessibility that would not be covered by the American with Disabilities Act such as TV programs available online will be required to come with captioning. Live Streaming videos may be included as well.
- 8) Tina Thompson asked a question about a newly interpreting company, Partners Interpreting. How would that help us in terms of the interpreter referral service. Steve answered that the RICDHH Referral Service's role is to find and confirm with interpreters to meet the needs of the community. Partners interpreting is an interpreting agency that is for profit. They serve Massachusetts and Rhode Island, southern Massachusetts. The question is how can they help us...it helps with advocacy. For example, with team interpreting, someone is resistant to hiring two interpreters, then it's important to have the advocacy for that. There is more of a voice in the community, that is also a benefit. We'll work together on common issues, and mostly on the advocacy level.
- 9) Steve wanted to note that he would not be able to make it to attend next meeting in April as he needed to attend Pennsylvania School for the Deaf Board of Trustees Meeting. It would be his last meeting of 12 years as a board member.

#### **COMMITTEES' REPORT:**

**BYLAWS:** Vice Chair Ed Rawlings said the Election is to be held tonight. The other thing is the committee will definitely look into the timing of Election of Officers, changing from "1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of the Calendar year" to "1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of the fiscal year" to parallel with the terms of the commissioners that begins and ends at the fiscal year. And clarification on the definition of "term" as the commissioner.

Discussion was followed as to when the bylaws revisions should be passed, when will the bylaws revisions in effective, what percentage of members needed to vote to pass the bylaws revisions, etc.

Membership: No Report  
Healthcare: No Report  
Award: No Report  
Consolidation study/work group: No Report

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

Chair Travis asked for consensus to go ahead for the Election tonight. All Commissioners were in agreement to have the election tonight.

Steve Florio provided the ballots for officers and mentioned that the Secretary was still vacant.

The commissioner asked Mary Wambach if she would be interested to be Secretary temporarily and she accepted. The Commissioners began asking questions to all candidates for officers starting with Jordan Sack as Treasurer, then Ed Rawlings as Vice Chair, and finally Travis Zellner as Chair.

Lisa Lieberman Sack asked a question for Travis Zellner, basically whether if there is a conflict of interest to serve both as the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of RISD and as the Chairperson of the Commission or not?.

Travis Zellner responded that he has asked this question to Steve Cross who works at the Rhode Island Commission Ethics Commission whether it is a conflict of interest. Steve Cross who investigated his question said in his email that there is no conflict of interest as long as there is no financial gain.

The first part of the process was complete.

The next process was to vote the ballots for the officers, 2010-2011.

Results of voting by the Commissioners are as follows:

1. Travis Zellner as Chairperson
2. Ed Rawlings as Vice Chairperson
3. Mary Wambach as Secretary
4. Jordan Sack as Treasurer

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** 3 Items. Please see below.

## **NEW BUSINESS ITEM #1 – FY2009 ANNUAL REPORT**

The concensus was made among the Commissioners that this needed more time to be reviewed and to be brought back at the next meeting for approval.

Some commissioners were concerned about data presented in the annual report that might need more clarifications such as to how the information is presented to support RICDHH's successes and critical needs.

## **NEW BUSINESS ITEM #2 – ADDING CART TO INTERPRETER REFERRAL SERVICE PERMANENTLY**

Lisa Lieberman Sack **made a motion** to approve that the RICDHH adds the CART Service to the RICDHH's Interpreter Referral Service permanently. Jordan Sack seconded. The motion was carried 8-0 by an unanimous vote.

## **NEW BUSINESS ITEM #3 – SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER: Emergency, Availability, and Access**

Tina Thompson explained as to why the task force should be formed but after a lengthy discussion among the Commissioners, it was decided to wait until the Strategic Planning on March 20<sup>th</sup> and perhaps, at the next Commissioners' meeting with clear purpose of the task force. Therefore, no business action was occurred here.

## **COMMUNICATION ON LEGISLATIVE ISSUES**

Jordan Sack brought up about the latest updates on legislative activities and asked questions about how the information was communicated and distributed from the RICDHH Office. Steve Florio answered several of his questions that the RICDHH used e-zine email distribution list and to groups that were of interest on legislative bills. Jordan and Steve agreed that campaigning about the legislative bills that the RICDHH proposed needs more creativity and outreach such as website petitions, flyers, "tree" networking, and among others in order to reach much more broaden audience than what they have so far.

The commissioners asked about the legislative hearings procedures, communication access provided at the hearings, etc. Steve helped answering all of the "legislative logistics and process" questions.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49pm declared by Chair Travis Zellner.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven A. Florio  
Executive Director  
(Covered for Lisa Lieberman Sack on the March 17, 2010 meeting).