

The RI CDHH Commissioner approved the minutes for the 06/30/2011 meeting on July 20, 2011.

Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

June 30, 2011

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Attending: Travis Zellner, Ed Rawlings, Jordan Sack, Karen Davis, Christine "Tina" Thompson, Sean Gill, James Simon, and Jesus M. Colon.

Commissioner(s) not Attending: James Compton, Andrew Knight, and Mary Wambach

Staff Attending: Steve Florio (Executive Director)

Public Attending: Betsy Beach and Paul Hughett

Communication Accommodations:

Interpreters: Jessica Morgan and Elizabeth Nadolski
CART service: Shelley Deming

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 6:04pm.

Chair Travis Zellner reported that James Compton, Andrew Knight, and Mary Wambach were not coming to the meeting this evening. He declared that the quorum was met because 8 commissioners were presented.

Review of Meeting Minutes (05/18/2011):

- 1) James Simon **made a motion** to approve the **May 18, 2011** meeting minutes as amended/corrected. Sean Gill seconded. The motion was carried 8-0.

Amendments/corrections were made as follows:

- 1) 'Initiative #1' was misspelled.
- 2) Added, 'including Chambers of Commerce' under Initiative #3.
- 3) Changed from 'Tina' to 'Andrew' under Initiative #3.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Chair Zellner wanted to report on a few things:

RISD – The Board of Trustees were busy with new leadership changes. Lori Dunsmore were on paid administrative leave until the end of her contract on June 30, 2011. The board established the Transformation Team to provide administrative support through the summer and fall. Commissioner Gist had approved RISD Board of Trustees' recommendation to use the Transformational model out of 4 different reform models. They have until November 23rd or 28th to come up with the Reform plan. The Transformation Team including a consultant that will be responsible to complete the reform plan. The consultant is Joseph Fischgrund who worked with RISD during the academic year in Warwick to coordinate the professional development for RISD staff. He just completed his contract as interim director of the New Jersey School for the Deaf so he was ready to assume a new assignment with the RISD. Many schools were knocking his door because of his extensive experience with deaf schools. As part of the reform plan process, there will be two or three stakeholders' meeting to gather their ideas and to discuss about the process going forward. It would be a challenge for the Board to maintain school in order because Dinaz Adenwalla announced that she stepped down as Assistant Director and went back to teacher's role. The position for the operational side will eventually be vacated as well in the fall. It would take time to post the positions, filling them, and finally to operate school. Bottom line is that the reform plan is still in the early stage. This was where we were now.

Jesus M Colon asked if Joseph Fischgrund would be interested in being a director of the Rhode Island School for the Deaf once the position is posted. Travis responded that he was interested in being a consultant and he has in fact had expressed that he was not interested in a long-term commitment.

Candidates for Commissioners – Travis reminded the Commissioners that the process of interviewing the candidates could easily consume the Commissioners' time. He wanted to make sure that the process was smooth in a timely manner.

Two Business Items – Travis said there were two business items to be considered. Please be sure to get them approved.

VICE CHAIR'S REPORT: No Report

SECRETARY'S REPORT: No Report

TREASURER'S REPORT: No Report

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- 1) **Budget News:** Steve Florio reported that the FY2012 budget for the RICDHH will be at the level funding. That is good news. Governor Chafee introduced his version of FY2012 budget back in March. About two weeks ago this month, the House Finance Committee introduced their own version of FY2012 Budget bill that eventually amended Governor Chafee's version of bill. Some were restored and some were eliminated. There were a number of changes within the FY2012 budget. They were: 1) The Department of Elderly Affairs will become a Division after merging with the Department of Human Services. A few years ago, the RICDHH was named to merge with the Department of Elderly Affairs but it did not happen. Now, we know what happened to Dept of Elderly Affairs., 2) Governor Chafee's version – The division of Veteran Affairs to become a Department but it did not happen. Instead, the division will have its new Director in the House version of budget bill., and 3) there was a significant budget cut that impacted the Department of Developmental Disabilities significantly. He did not have the details but will share with the Commissioners as soon as the information was available. As for RI State Council on the Arts, it saved the RISCA's proposal 100%. Unfortunately for Kansas, for example, they eliminated the State Agency of Art entirely. Arizona and Missouri, they zeroed their budget but the agency remains active through volunteerism. So for the State Commissions for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, they faced similar budget challenges. Our neighboring state, Connecticut Commission for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI), an independent agency and once an unthinkable impact, by legislators, merged with the Department of Social Services and be part of the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. We need to be vigilant about the budget and be sure that the RICDHH remains valuable to the constituents.
- 2) **Performance Management (PM) Initiatives** – Steve reported that he received an email from the PM team letting him know and other Department heads know that we should use the PM template online through SurveyMonkey. Steve was asked to send a sample to the PM team for their review and share feedback if any. Steve will let the Commissioners as to when is the deadline and how this goes from here.

Tina made the comments that the performance measurement outcomes should be built for each program and services. Interpreter/CART Referral Service and Information and Referral Service do have the data collection such as how many requests were made, how many people stopped by, percentage of requests filled and unfilled, so on. What RICDHH really needs is the outcome such as what is the consumers' satisfaction so the RICDHH can use this outcome to justify and support current services/programs.

Karen Davis concurred with Tina, from her ORS experience, there was a lot of scrutiny in numbers and outcomes that were what were looked at and in order to justify the existence of a program.

Tina followed up by emphasizing that the state-wide system needs to be reviewed, not on an individual basis but the system-wide shall be considered for improvement and/or change. It would require funding to support this activity.

Steve added that the State of Rhode Island took advantage of the Federal Stimulus Package for the last two years. Since the Federal Stimulus Package was no longer available, the Governor and legislators had to find a way to fill in the hole of budget for FY2012. That was why we saw a lot of recent actions on the Governor's and Legislators' parts to ensure that the budget was in agreement among all parties.

- 3) **Legislative News:** Senate Bill 0302 was passed in both Senate and House and was recently transmitted to the Governor for his signature or his veto. He has 7 days to consider. This bill would reduce the number of Board members from 9 to 5, adding a new license requirement for educational interpreters, and the director of the department must respond to the Board's recommendation of action within 30 days.
- 4) **New Equipment to be Purchased** – Steve shared good news to the Commissioners that the RICDHH will get a few equipment pieces that will be purchased by the RI Hamilton Relay. Jim Lanni who is responsible to oversee the Relay service from PUC announced that the RI Hamilton Relay had not reached the required spending limit so he asked a few organizations like PARI, TechACCESS, RICDHH, ATAP, etc. to give them the list of equipment that they need. Later, we learned that the PUC needed to spend up to \$26,000 on equipment. Steve requested for LED Display equipment, one of the most expensive equipment of all, Pockettalkers, Ubi-Duo Intertype equipment, and other small devices. As results, all organizations ordered equipment at approximately \$22,700 altogether. RICDHH should receive them sometimes during the summer.
- 5) **New Printer/Scanner** – He shared that he now has a new printer that has scanner feature like feeder. He would not require to do manually by opening the lid, putting the paper in, then closing the lid, so forth. The printer (scanner) can feed up to 30 pages at a time without interruption and that will turn into a PDF file instantly. He was excited about it so he could clear up his desk as soon as possible.
- 6) **Bonnie Abols** – Steve announced that Bonnie Abols, the winner of RICDHH 2010 Recognition Award, is retired from OSCIL effectively today. Steve monitors the situation if the OSCIL decided to close the Deaf Services and would respond if necessary to handle the workloads of their former and current clients to ensure smooth transition to other agency or service.
- 7) **Hearing Loss Association of America Conference** – Steve announced that the National Hearing Loss Association of America Conference will be held here in Providence, RI on June 21-24, 2012. The RICDHH will make sure that the convention attendees feel welcome to be here in RI.

James Simon asked if Steve can send out sort of e-mail notification about the latest legislative news. Steve responded that he will do that.

CANDIDATES FOR COMMISSIONER SEATS

Chair Travis explained that Sean Gill's and James Simon's terms will expire on June 30, 2011 but because they served out their 1st term and they have expressed their interest in continuing serving on the Commission, according to the RICDHH Commissioners' bylaws, they would serve for the other term automatically. He clarified that Andrew Knight was appointed to serve for the remainder of John Dunsmore's term that would end on June 30th. He was not sure about Andrew's interest in continuing to serve for a new term. He would get in touch with Andrew to find out his interest.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

James Simon **made a motion** to go into closed/executive session to discuss on the questions for interview with candidates and to interview with candidates for the seat of the Commissioner. Jesus M Colon seconded. The motion was carried 8-0.

The closed/executive session meeting started at 6:47pm.

Chair Travis asked Vice-Chair Ed Rawlings to take over the floor to run so Travis can participate in the interview process.

They interviewed with Travis Zellner for the 'Deaf' seat in an informal format. Then, Chair Zeller took over the floor from Vice-Chair Ed Rawlings and proceeded with the interview process. They interviewed with Jordan Sack for the 'Deaf but not ASL' seat in an informal format.

Jesus M Colon made a motion to recommend Jordan Sack for the other term. Karen Davis seconded. All were in favor.

The commissioners discussed and chose which question to ask all candidates for the seats of the commissioner. They interviewed with Betsy Beach and Paul Hughett for two (2) 'Hard of Hearing' seats.

After the interview was completed, the commissioners discussed on the answers they received from both candidates.

James Simon **made a motion** to recommend that Paul Hughett be appointed to serve as a commissioner for the remainder of the term for Ed Rawlings who resigned from the Commission effective June 30, 2011 and that Betsy Beach be appointed to serve as a commissioner for the 1st full term in replacing for James Compton who expired his term on June 30, 2011. Ed Rawlings seconded. The motion was carried 8-0.

After no further discussion is needed and no questions/concerns are addressed, Tina Thompson **made a motion** to adjourn the closed/executive session. Karen Davis seconded. The motion was carried 8-0.

The closed/executive session meeting ended at 8:04pm.

OPEN SESSION

To seal the executive session meeting minutes was the subject that was discussed and clarified as to when to seal it or not, what type of information that should be sealed or not, etc.

Chair Zellner announced that Betsy Beach and Paul Hughett will be recommended by the Commissioners for Governor's consideration for appointment. Travis on behalf of the Commissioners congratulated to Betsy and Paul.

Chair Zellner requested that the Commissioners jumped to the new business items and if they have time left after new business, then they can return back to Committees' Reports. The Commissioners were in full consensus with Travis' suggestion.

COMMITTEES' REPORT:

BYLAWS: No Report.

Membership: Travis will ask Mary Wambach to consider serving for the other term.

Healthcare: Tina Thompson gave the report:

1. Steve Florio and Tina Thompson had done training for health care professionals at Roger Williams Medical Center early in this spring and they had a good turnout. The evaluations that were completed were very very positive.
2. The Hospital Association of RI (HARI) wanted to change the format of the training in October and it would be applicable to CEOs, Senior Level Administrators, doctors, and nurses. HARI also will apply CEUs for several professionals such as CEUs for hospital administrators, CEUs for doctors, CEUs for nurses, and CEUs for social workers. She was excited because people do listen their presentations. Next training will be held at Providence College in the evening to accommodate a large audience. Also, they would provide a buffet dinner before training. Clearly, it was a big deal and very positive.
3. A few people did come to them asking for training at their facilities such as the WIC Blackstone Valley Health Center (WIC program) staff.
4. The Consumer Education Workgroup was phenomenal. The members of the group were Bonnie Abols, Betsy Beach, James Litvack, and Deb Raiche. They came up with the blueprint of various healthcare educational topics. Now, they were done. The blueprint needs to be implemented by the Commission staff going forward including funding to cover activities with topics.
5. Jim Simon reported on behalf of the Resource Manual Workgroup that they met with Deb Topal to learn what resource she had been working on and compare her work to our ideas as to how the resource manual would look like for the Healthcare Task Force. They discovered that Deb's objectives for the resources manual and workgroup's objectives are completely different. That helped them to go in the right direction.
6. Steve Florio reported on behalf of the Policy Workgroup that even though the legislative bills were not successfully considered by the General Assembly, they have raised awareness about these issues with the legislators. That was a good way for them to learn and to become aware of them, not only that, but also to develop relationship with supporters like the Rhode Island Medical Society. He looked forward for new opportunities working with RIMS and other organizations.

Award: Steve explained the types of awards that will be given away at the RICDHH's Annual Coffee Hour event in November.

Interpreting Service

Task Force: They did not have a meeting since the last Commissioners' meeting. The last meeting was cancelled due to lack of interpreter. The next meeting was scheduled for July 15th.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

RICDHH Strategic Plan: No discussion due to time limitation

Evaluation/Toll for CDHH Personnel: No discussion due to time limitation

OLD BUSINESS: No item.

NEW BUSINESS: 2 items. Please see below.

Steve Florio gave a brief background on how the policies and procedures amended. The last time the RICDHH adopted the interpreter referral service policies and procedures was February 16, 2006. It was good time to make some changes based on experience since 2006. Also, the RICDHH never had the CART Referral Service Policies and Procedures before when the CART was introduced and part of the service but now, the RICDHH does have the draft for the Commissioners to approve.

The interpreters, CART providers, and requestors had the opportunity to share their inputs and thoughts on new state rates for FY2012 and FY2013 and policies for CART providers and interpreters prior to May 31st through mail, e-mail, or fax. The hearing was held on May 31, 2011 to give them opportunity to share their feedback on these proposals. After that, Steve was ready to submit the current draft of CART Referral Service Policies and Procedures as well as Interpreter Referral Service Policies and Procedures for Commissioners to approve.

NEW BUSINESS ITEM #1 – Approval on CART Referral Services Policies and Procedures

NEW BUSINESS ITEM #2 – Approval on Interpreter Referral Services Policies and Procedures

Some commissioners reserved their concerns that they did not have much time to review the policies and procedures so Chair Travis asked them if they would be in agreement that these two items be postponed to the next meeting, July 20th. The Commissioners were in favor of Travis' suggestion.

Chair Travis clarified that if any Commissioners have any questions/concerns with the policies and procedures, please send an email to Steve directly, not to all commissioners because of Open Meeting Act concerns.

ED RAWLINGS

Excerpt from the CART Transcript:

"I just would like in closing I would just like to say that this is my last meeting and I've been a commissioner for ten and a half years and we've accomplished a lot during that period of time, particularly -- times with the, when they tried to consolidate us with other offices and departments and Steve has created the board manual and now we're developing the strategic plan. So I think you've got a strong base to keep building on and expanding. And we're getting a lot of new members so you must develop them as to the orientation and subject everyone to strategic planning and the very workings of the Commission. And it's been a pleasure working with the commission. And I'll still be around once in a while."

The Commissioners said "Thank you" with 'high-hand' waving and hand-applauding.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm declared by Chair Travis Zellner.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven A. Florio
Executive Director
(Secretary for the June 30, 2011 meeting).