

The RI CDHH Commissioner approved the minutes for the 12/14/2011 meeting on January 18, 2012.

Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

December 14, 2011

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Attending: *Christine Thompson, Karen Davis, Jesus Colon, Travis Zellner, James Simon, Paul Hughett, and Betsy Beach.*

Commissioner(s) not Attending: *Jordan Sack*

Staff Attending: *Steve Florio (Executive Director)*

Public Attending: *Heather Niedbala, James Colannino, Paul Molley, Margaret Molley, and Heather Piasczyk*

Communication Accommodations:

Interpreters: Jessica Morgan and Carol Fay

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 Christine Thompson at 6:07pm.

Chair Tina Thompson conducted a roll call. She announced that everyone was here except Jordan Sack, therefore the quorum was met. She requested that some agenda items need to move around for this evening. First on review and approve the meeting from October 19th, then save the chair's report and the executive director's report until after new business so the board of the commissioners may focus on interviewing candidates right away for the commissioner's seats. The board of the commissioners had no objection and agreed with Tina's request.

Review of Meeting Minutes (10/19/2011):

- 1) Karen Davis **made a motion** to approve the **October 19, 2011** meeting minutes as corrected. Jim Simon seconded. The motion was carried 7-0.

Corrections were made as follows:

- 1) Changed from "STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE:" on the 2nd page to "ORIENTATION for NEW commissioners and refreshing for current commissioners:"
- 2) Revised on page 2, number 4 from "Items or topics of importance not originally included on meeting agendas can be voted on, and added onto the agenda." to "Items or topics of importance not originally included on meeting agenda that was already advertised to the public can be added on the agenda with an approval by a simple majority of the board of the commissioners presented at the meeting for further discussion and consideration to vote on."
- 3) Added, "This was in reference to the committee meetings." on page 3, number 6.

CANDIDATES FOR COMMISSIONERS' SEATS:

Chair Thompson introduced all candidates, Paul Molley, Heather Niedbala, and James Colannino, to all current commissioners and explained an overview of the Commission as to what it is about, why it exists, how it is operated, how often the commissioners meet, what expectations of the commissioners, and a brief of its history.

Karen Davis **made a motion** to go into the executive session to discuss on questions for candidates. Betsy Beach seconded. The motion was carried 7-0.

The Executive Session began at 6:47pm.

The Executive Session was open after Travis **made a motion** and seconded by Jesus Colon at 6:55pm.

Chair Thompson informed the candidates that the Commissioners were ready to proceed interviewing. Travis Zellner volunteered to explain to them about whether they want to be interview in the open or closed session including various ramifications that may be occurred if they chose open or closed session.

Travis reported that James Colannino wanted to be interviewed in the closed session, therefore, all candidates be interviewed in the closed session.

Karen Davis **made a motion** to go into the executive session to interview with the candidates. Jim Simon seconded. The motion was carried 7-0.

James Colannino was the first candidate to be interviewed.

Paul Molley was the 2nd candidate to be interviewed.

Travis Zellner **made a motion** that the board of the commissioners recommends Paul Molley to be appointed by the Governor to serve on the Commission as a DEAF commissioner. Jim Simon seconded. The motion was carried 7-0.

The meeting was on recess at 7:45pm.

The meeting resumed at 7:52pm.

Jim Simon announced that he **recused himself** from the interview process involving Heather Niedbala because Jim Simon is Heather's supervisor at Perspectives Corporation.

Heather Niedbala came in as the 3rd and last candidate to be interviewed. She brought Heather Piasczyk in who is a certified sign language interpreter and who would speak for Heather Niedbala during the interview.

Jesus Colon **made a motion** that the board of the commissioners recommends Heather Niedbala to be appointed by the Governor to serve on the Commission as a DEAF commissioner. Travis Zellner seconded. The motion was carried 6-0. (Jim Simon recused from voting.)

Travis Zellner **made a motion** to open the executive session. Jesus Colon seconded. The motion was carried 7-0.

The meeting was open at 8:11pm.

Chair Tina Thompson invited all candidates back in the Conference Room A. Chair Tina Thompson announced that the Board of the Commissioners has recommended Paul Molley and Heather Niedbala to be appointed by the Governor to serve on the Commission as the Commissioners. Chair Thompson also encouraged James Colannino to participate in several committees to become familiar with the RICDHH and to contribute his expertise. Tina Thompson thanked them for their time.

NEW BUSINESS: 3 items. Please see below.

NEW BUSINESS ITEM #1 – Review and discuss 2012 Legislative Bill packet.

Travis Zellner **made a motion** that #1, #6, and #8 from the Legislative Bill 2012 packet be pursued for this 2012 Legislation Session. Karen Davis seconded. The motion was carried 7-0.

#1 – Remitted \$80,000 to the RICDHH from the relay fund for Emergency Communication and Public Access Telecommunication program.

#6 – Insurance Mandated Coverage on Hearing Aids – a full cost of hearing aid for each ear for every 3 years for children and increased to \$1,500 from \$700 for each ear for every 3 years for adults, 18 and up.

#8 – Closed captioning activation in the public accommodation is required if requested.

NEW BUSINESS ITEM #2 – Discussion formation of the 2012 Anniversary CDHH Celebration committee. Tabled for the next meeting due to time not permitted.

NEW BUSINESS ITEM #3 – Meeting schedule for 2012.

Travis Zellner **made a motion** that the board of the commissioners approved the meeting dates for 2012. Jesus Colon seconded. The motion was carried 7-0.

Meeting Dates and Times for 2012 as follows:

January 18, 2012
February 15, 2012
March 21, 2012
April 18, 2012
May 16, 2012
June 20, 2012
July 18, 2012
August 15, 2012
September 19, 2012
October 17, 2012
November 7, 2012 (Annual Coffee Hour)
December 19, 2012

All will be from 6:00pm to 9:00pm and held in Conference Room A (subject to be changed), 2nd Floor at the Department of Administration Building.

Closing Comments:

Steve Florio clarified as to why State Senator William Walaska was appointed to serve on the board of the commissioners. It was then thought that the bill on separation of power was passed that affected the RICDHH. After receiving the letter of appointment from the President of the Senate office, it was realized that the bill was never impacting RICDHH at all. Steve will check into the Office of Speaker of the House if they could appoint a representative from the House chamber to serve on the board of the commissioners.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven A. Florio
Executive Director
(Volunteer to cover Jesus Colon's role as Secretary for the December 14, 2011 meeting because Jesus' hand was injured).