

The RI CDHH Commissioner approved the minutes for the 05/22/2013 meeting on June 19, 2013.

Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

May 22, 2013

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Attending: *Travis Zellner, James Simon, Heather Niedbala, Paul Molloy, Todd Murano, Betsy Beach, and Julia Gold.*

Commissioner(s) not Attending: *Jordan Sack*

Staff Attending: *Steven A. Florio (Executive Director) and Holly St. Pierre (Interpreter and CART Referral Specialist)*

Public Attending: *Kelly McCorkle, John Roccabello, Donna Lynne Doyce, Gail Higgins Fogarty, Rosa Norberg, Jessica Morgan, and Heather Piasczyk.*

Communication Accommodations:

Interpreters: Maureen McEntee and Elizabeth Nadolski

CloseVision Interpreters: Carol Fay and Lindsey Medeiros

CART service: Tammi Burnham

Support Service Provider: Margaret Molloy (volunteer)

Location: *Conference Room A at the Department of Administration building, 2nd Floor*

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairperson Travis Zellner at 6:04pm.

Vice Chair Zellner conducted the roll call and determined that the quorum was satisfied so therefore, the meeting proceeded. He informed the commissioners that Jordan Sack could not be here tonight so he assumed his duties of chairperson to run the meeting. He made a note that Paul Hughett officially resigned from the commission effective on March 18, 2013.

Review of Meeting Minutes (03/20/2013):

- 1) Todd Murano **made a motion** to approve the **March 20, 2013** meeting minutes as written. Heather Niedbala seconded. The motion was carried 7-0.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Steve Florio started by updating on Governor's budget bill. Since the last meeting in March 2013, there were a number of amendments, modifications, or eliminations of the budget bill but to date, none of them is affecting on RICDHH's Agency Budget or Article 17 (Emergency and Public Communication Access Program). The general assembly will start debating on budget sometimes next month. He will keep the Commissioners posted of anything that may impact on RICDHH's budget.

The Hearing Loss Awareness Month and Better Speech and Hearing Month are mixed with a success and opportunity for evaluation. RICDHH hosted two parts of EXPO, from 11am to 3:30pm and 6pm to 8pm for the first time. As for next year, he felt that RICDHH should host an EXPO during the day instead of having two parts of EXPO on the same day. Some vendors suggested that we should host two EXPOs, one in Providence and another in different town in RI on the different day. He will look into this. The last event for the month is the Healthcare Reform Forum which will be held on May 30th. Lisa Hamlin of Hearing Loss Association of America enjoyed her time being here in Providence, Rhode Island. She gave the evening presentation, "TV and Internet: Captioning", as part of EXPO II and she was also part of the breakfast meeting on insurance coverage of hearing aids on Friday morning, May 17th. I must thank RI Hamilton Relay for making her trip to RI from Maryland possible. The breakfast meeting on May 17th was very productive and a significant step forward. We had Christopher Koller, State Insurance Commissioner, Shawn Donuhue of Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI, Rep. Robert Jacquard, James Healey, Audiologist, Kelly McCorkle, Hard of Hearing consumer, and Iraida Williams, Parent Advocate as well as staff member, Pam Zellner. We had all 360-degree perspectives on this specific topic in the same room. This breakfast refreshment was provided by the Hearing Loss Association of Rhode Island.

He saved the legislative updates and MPAs for Interpreters and CART providers until the items including legislative updates on the agenda are reached.

He gave the Commissioners a head up that there will be a guest speaker, Deborah Masland of RIPIN Early Intervention Coordinator, at the next meeting on June 19th. She will talk generally about the early intervention program in RI for about 20 minutes then questions/answers follow for about 10 minutes. Jordan Sack would like to bring people in to talk about programs, accessibility, or services going forward so the commissioners will have the opportunity to learn from individuals who is part of the organization/provider/service/agency and to ask questions concerning on deaf and hard of hearing issues at the same time.

The commissioners expressed reservations about having guest speakers to come and give presentation on various topics because of time constraints/limitations. They accepted this plan for June but they would like to discuss more about this for future meetings at the next meeting.

SUB-COMMITTEES' REPORTS:

Membership – Travis reported that we still have three vacant seats (2 hard of hearings and 1 deaf). He made a note that 6 of current commissioners' terms are about to expire by July 1st. He explained the process for these 1st termers (Betsy Beach, Heather Niedbala, and Paul Molloy). He said, according to the bylaws, they can acknowledge their interest in serving for the 2nd term without having to go through the interview process. The commissioners need to know their interest at the next meeting. He explained that individuals who have served more than 2 terms (Jim Simon, Travis Zellner, and Jordan Sack), they would need to submit the interest and they would have to go through the interview just like any other candidates to give everyone equal chance. He reported that he has received one candidate who is interested in serving on the commission and this person will be invited for an interview next month.

RICDHH Orientation for newly appointments – Steve offered the orientation for recent appointed commissioners to become familiar with the RICDHH and as her/his role as commissioner. Steve agreed to send emails to set up the dates for the orientation.

RICDHH Awards – Travis explained about the role of the committee. This will be re-visited at the upcoming meeting(s).

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES:

Steve gave the latest updates on legislation.

1. HB 5818 and SB 277/317 – Access to Movies
2. HB 5830 and SB 415 – Access in RI Courts
3. HB 5419 – Mandated Insurance Coverage on Hearing Aids

He went to all hearings that were held in April 2013. All bills were very supportive except one. HB 5818 and SB 277 – New England Theaters Owners (NETO) in the past had opposed to this bill but this year, they support the bill only if the language is amended by inserting, "closed" before captioning. That is encouraging news since they did not oppose it. However, all bills were voted by the committee for further study. This does not mean they are dead. I had some bills in the past that were voted for further study and ended up moving through the legislative process and became a law. It could mean either ways depending on a number of factors.

Break – 7:02pm

Meeting Resumed at 7:12pm

RHODE ISLAND REGISTRY OF THE INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF (RIRID):

Travis introduced Heather Piasczyk, President of RIRID to the floor. Heather thanked the commissioners for putting the RIRID on agenda to give them an opportunity to tell what the RIRID is all about.

1. RIRID praises RICDHH, Steve Florio and his staff members for its commitment to the interpreters' issues for many years.

2. RIRID officially appoints Rosa Norberg as the RIRID liaison to RICDHH. Rosa will be the point person for any RICDHH issues or functions on behalf of RIRID going forward.
3. RIRID wants to maintain a strong relationship with the RICDHH as they have done in the past.
4. RIRID wishes to improve some communication issues on interpreting issues such as licensure, policies and procedures, legislation, board of the interpreters, and among others. They look forward to working with the RICDHH closely going forward.

Break – 7:55pm

Meeting Resumed at 8:04pm

The commissioners through consensus agreed to table Strategic Planning until the next meeting.

Master Pricing Agreement for Interpreters and CART Providers as Independent Contractors –

Steve explained that the current MPA for independent contractors will be expired by July 1st.

1. The Master Pricing Agreement (MPA) has three parts, state rates, policies, and additional fees.
 2. The RICDHH is obligated on behalf of the Division of Purchases to conduct the process and submit the state rates, policies, and fees.
 3. The process began in February 2013 starting with state agencies that requested for service frequently and ended in May 2013 after hearing inputs and feedback from the interpreter community. Two meetings with the state agencies and two public hearings on state rates/fees and policies.
 4. Changes are as follows:
 - a. Increasing rates.
 - b. MPA will be good for FY2014, FY2015, and FY2016.
 - c. CDI will have its own category for state rates.
 - d. The next "5th anniversary" rate increment will be set at the beginning of fiscal year.
 - e. Reduced miles for travel time for those who work in legal/court settings.
 - f. NIC-Advanced, NIC-C, and NIC-2011 will be in the same category in FY2016.
 - g. State-screened will be good only for 5 years. If anyone with state-screened passed the written part of RID examination, their contract with the state would be extended until the date expiration of the written examination, (up to 5 years). If a person with state-screened did not pass the written part of RID examination until 5th year of state-screened, the MPA will not be awarded after the 5th year.
 - h. Improved or clarified languages in policies.
- 2) After the question/answer session among the commissioners was concluded, Todd Murano **made a motion** to approve the state rates, amendments on policies, and fees as part of **Master Pricing Agreement for Interpreters and CART providers as Independent Contractors for FY 2014, FY2015, and FY2016**. Julia Gold seconded. The motion was carried 5-2. (5 in favor =Todd Murano, Julia Gold, Travis Zellner, Betsy Beach, and Jim Simon) and (2 not in favor= Heather Niedbala and Paul Molloy).

Travis thanked the commissioners for making progress in the meeting. The next meeting will be on June 19, 2013.

He adjourned the meeting at 8:59pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven A. Florio
Acting Secretary