

The RI CDHH Commissioner approved the minutes for the 09/18/2013 meeting on December 18, 2013.

Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

September 18, 2013

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Attending: *David Abell, Betsy Beach, Julia Gold, Todd Murano, Heather Niedbala, Jordan Sack, and Paul Molloy.*

Commissioner(s) not Attending: *James Simon and Travis Zellner*

Staff Attending: *Steven A. Florio (Executive Director)*

Public Attending: *Heather Piasczyk, Rosa Norberg, Damien Thompson, Tim Riker, Michael Nacci, Jr., Matthew Gilsbach, and Ian Sanborn.*

Communication Accommodations:

Interpreters: Trisha Geddry and Elizabeth Nadolski
CloseVision Interpreters: Kristen N. Marotto and Lindsey Medeiros
CART service: Shelley Deming (Allied Reporters)
Support Service Provider: Margaret Molloy

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jordan Sack at 6:07pm.

Chair Jordan Sack conducted the roll call of Commissioners and declared that the quorum was met. Travis Zellner and James Simon could not be here tonight.

Review of Meeting Minutes (08/21/2013):

- 1) Julia Gold made a motion to approve the **August 21, 2013** meeting minutes as written. David Abell seconded. The motion was carried 7-0.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

1. Guest Speaker:
 - o Steve spoke with Gary Talbot of AMTRAK and a representative from the RI Department of Transportation. He learned that the renovation project is not for inside the train station. If this is the case, it would be AMTRAK's responsibility to ensure accessibility. But the project is for outside of the building, changing landscaping, parking, perhaps, adding some picnic tables and other comestic works. This is the responsibility of RI Department of Transportation.
 - o He was able to hold of the ADA coordinator at Providence Airport Corporation to see if she could come and talk about accessibility at the airport. She would prefer to meet with him first to understand the purpose of the presentation before. She is currently 8-month pregnant. He hoped they could connect and make plans before she is out on maternity leave for a few months.
2. Budget News:
 - o He handed in the budget submissions to the Governor, Budget Office, and fiscal analysts of each chamber (Senate and House of Representative) this week. He said he was relieved that the submission was done.
 - o He hoped to hear from Governor's response with our favor adding a FTE for FY2015 sometimes in November 2013.
3. LED Equipment News:
 - o The LED equipment was purchased by the RI Hamilton Relay a little more than a year ago. Steve wanted to thank Jeff Greiner, President of Allied Reporters, Inc. and Shelley Deming, CART provider, for their time to come to the RICDHH office and tested the LED equipment. Initially, it did not work or function correctly. It took them a few months to finally correct this problem. It was the combination of driver's latest version, software settings, and upgraded program for LED equipment.
 - o Steve needed to develop the policies and procedures as to how to use the equipment by the public.
4. EPCAP Updates:
 - o Steve said he has received a number of resumes for the contracting position. He hoped to have someone hired before the next Commissioners' meeting in October.
5. Updates on Deaf Awareness Month:
 - o Steve said the Deaf Awareness Month went very well so far starting at RI School for the Deaf Kick-off. It will conclude on this coming Sunday at Providence Children's Museum. Between today and Sunday, Corliss planned to host the fundraising pasta dinner on Thursday evening, Alumni Association of RISD planned to have car wash fundraising event on Saturday morning, and RI Association of the Deaf planned to host the ASL Film on Saturday evening.

6. Surveys on Interpreter/CART Referral Service:
 - o Steve said he and his staff members had the opportunity to review all survey responses and develop the plan to address these issues concerned by the responses. He had the copies of findings available for the Commissioners.
 - o Steve intended to submit the final plan as to what the RICDHH will do to improve the Interpreter/CART Referral Services. They would be categorized by short-term and long-term.

7. Update on "Special Joint Study Commission on Accessibility at the movie theaters in RI"
 - o Steve said there was no activity in term of establishing the special joint study commission by the Joint Committee on Legislative Services at the State House. Steve will follow up with them as to where this stands because the special joint study commission's report must be submitted by March 4, 2014.

CHAIRPERSON:

1. Welcome to the RICDHH - an unusual large audience as part of the Deaf Awareness Month
 - o Jordan gave some facts about the RICDHH and about projects with the RICDHH such as visible signs, microphone system with FM for meetings, AMTRAK, and screen equipment for deaf-blind.
 - o He asked about accessibility at the Providence Airport
 1. Audience/Commissioners' comments:
 - a. The announcement system is inaccessible.
 - b. Public videophones should be established for ASL users
 - c. Awareness/Information sessions for airport employees
 - d. FM loop systems at desk similar to other airports and NY subways.
 - e. Emergency evacuation – Improvement on protocols to communicate with deaf and hard of hearing people needed.

Break – 6:45pm

Meeting Resumed at 6:55pm

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

All candidates discussed about why they were interested in serving as officers.

All commissioners voted by marking next to the name for each position.

Steve collected and reported that all positions were voted, 7-0.

The Officers for the year of 2013-2014 are as follows:

1. **CHAIRPERSON** - *Jordan Sack*
2. **VICE CHAIRPERSON** - *Heather Niedbala*
3. **SECRETARY** - *Jim Simon*
4. **TREASURER** - *Betsy Beach*

SUB-COMMITTEES' REPORTS:

Jordan reported that he has met with Steve prior to the meeting to discuss about the directions the Commissioners are going forward with list of issues.

He proposed that three sub-committees to be established, Tech Committee, Healthcare Committee, and Community Resources Committee. He said each committee has its discretion to prioritize issues to pursue. Each committee will give progress report quarterly. Month 1- Tech Committee Report, Month 2- Healthcare Committee Report, Month 3 – Community Resources Committee Report, Month 4 – Tech Committee Report, so forth so everyone can participate and follow the progress. He elaborated each committee below.

Tech Committee generally covers the area of:

- Communication access equipment for meetings
- VideoLogs
- Blogs
- CART services
- And many more.

Healthcare Committee generally covers the area of:

- Mental Health issues
- Healthcare issues
- Behavioral Health issues
- Healthcare Affordable Care Act
- Quality of communication access services
- And many more.

Community Resources Committee generally covers the area of:

- Develop materials and pamphlets for community, senior centers, professionals, etc. for example: one-page informational sheet for distribution for specific audience like public schools, senior citizens, colleges, etc.
- Town Hall meetings
- And many more.

Tech Committee (David Abell-Chair): Betsy Beach, Todd Murano, and Heather Niedbala

Healthcare Committee (James Simon- Chair):

Community Resources Committee (Jordan Sack – Chair): Betsy Beach, Paul Molloy, and Julia Gold

Zoning in Providence

Julia Gold mentioned to the Commissioners that the City of Providence will have its activity on zoning codes of which the city has not done for more than 4 decades. She suggested that the commissioners should consider the opportunity to get involved in the zoning process because they could establish some benchmarks or standards within the certain zones through the Zoning Board. This is the other way to improve the system without going through the legislative process and that something the City of Providence is responsible for enforcing it. Julia Gold will collect more information and get back to the Commissioners to see if there is anything that the Commissioners or RICDHH can do something about it.

COFFEE HOUR

The commissioners began to brainstorm ideas for the Annual Coffee Hour in November 2013. Everyone wants it to be changed. They wanted to keep State House as a location and November 13, 2013 as a date.

Break – 8:00pm

Meeting Resumed at 8:16pm

COFFEE HOUR (continued)

They came to a few ideas as follows:

1. Representative Arthur Handy as a featured speaker at the coffee hour.
2. Panel Discussion
3. Ice Breaker Activity
4. Each commissioner brings 10 friends to the coffee hour.
5. Advertising about this event to all college students in RI.
6. Invite Johnson and Wales University Culinary Program to cook and serve refreshments
7. Blast through Facebook, Providence Journal, TV, and other avenues.
8. Ice cream provided at the end of the program

They agreed to continue until next month to finalize the program.

Jordan Sack adjourned the meeting at 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven A. Florio
Acting Secretary