

The RI CDHH Commissioner approved the minutes for the 06/18/2014 meeting on July 16, 2014.

Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

June 18, 2014

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Attending: Heather Niedbala, Joshua Pila, Betsy Beach, Todd Murano, Julia Gold, James Simon, David Abell, and Travis Zellner

Commissioner(s) not Attending: Jordan Sack and Timothy Riker

Staff Attending: Steven A. Florio (Executive Director) and Mi Ok Bruining (EPCAP Coordinator)

Public Attending:

Communication Accommodations:

Interpreters: Jessica Morgan (MPA-358) and Christine West (MPA-358)

CART service: Shelley Deming (Allied Reporters)

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

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Heather Niedbala at 6:07pm.

Vice Chair Niedbala reported that the quorum was met after conducting roll call. Vice Chair Niedbala informed that Loop Demonstration by Shanahan Sound was cancelled because the person who was supposed to come for demonstration was sick. She and Pamela Zellner will try to reschedule for next meeting in July 2014. She requested that the Chair's Remarks on the agenda be moving up to the beginning of the meeting. The commissioners were in agreement with her request. She asked the commissioners to bear with her since she was new to the procedures of the meeting. She appreciated the commissioners' support.

Review of Meeting Minutes (05/21/2014):

- 1) Todd Murano **made a motion** to approve the May 21, 2014 meeting minutes as written. David Abell seconded. The motion was carried 7-0-0.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

1. Steve was happy to report that the embroidered apparels with the RICDHH logo had arrived. Those who have ordered them please contact Pam Zellner to arrange to pick them up. They look good
2. Steve reported that he just returned back from the State House. The "condolence" resolution in honor of Kelly Marie Butterworth was introduced, read, and passed by the House of Representatives. It was a nice presentation by Representative Eileen Naughton. Kelly's two sisters, Cheryl and Joyce, as well as her circle of friends were presented to receive the citation. House Bill 8362. Kelly who battled cancer for more than 12 years had touched many people especially in the RI School for the Deaf community. It was a great way to remember her legacy.
3. BUDGET NEWS: The budget for FY 2015 was passed by the House last week and it should be passed this week by the Senate. He did not foresee any amendment made by the Senate. Therefore, the budget for FY2015 will remain at the level funding, no new additional money or no budget cut. They did not include the funding for the 4th FTE. Travis Zellner will give the up-to-dated report shortly on 4th FTE.
4. The Budget plan for FY2016 is underway as he has received a number of requests from the Budget Office and Performance Management office to prepare the documents including strategic plans. Steve will propose with the Commissioners' approval the strategic plan in August 2014. It will be aligned with what the commissioners' have been working on. September 1st is the deadline to submit the budget request for FY2016 and strategic plan by agencies that have the budget less than \$1 million. September 15th is the deadline for agencies that have more than \$1 million budget.
5. The emergency preparedness training will be provided in the fall of 2014. Steve asked the commissioners which month, September or October, is good for everyone. After Steve heard from the commissioners' opinions, he will check with the RI Emergency Management Agency and other 1st responders and emergency personnel at the RI EMA's Annual Hurricane Conference this coming Friday at Crown Plaza in Warwick, RI.
6. Legislative News: He reported that all bills that we had been monitoring were more likely dead. The Special Joint Study Commission on Accessibility at the Movie Theaters that was passed in the 2013 session was dead. This commission had its first meeting scheduled for last Monday, June 16th but it was cancelled. The House Policy Office informed me that the House wanted to create another resolution, this time, it will be House's study commission instead of a joint study commission between the Senate and House. The Resolution will be heard and read tomorrow on June 19th. Steve said it was unfortunate that it did not happen through the year but he was more optimistic that the House will take the initiatives more seriously. Steve would like to add more representatives on the list to serve on this study commission. He will try his best to include them.

The representatives from the Hearing Loss Association of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Association of the Deaf, Alumni Association of Rhode Island School for the Deaf, and the Rhode Island Chapter of National Federation of the Blind were suggested.

7. Steve met Rep. Robert Jacquard about hosting the Stakeholders' follow up meeting on the Mandated Insurance Coverage on Hearing Aids this year. Rep. Jacquard suggested that the meeting be held in November 2014 after the election because all legislators will be very busy campaigning for election through the summer and fall. Steve will keep the board of commissioners posted as soon as plan is implemented.
8. Steve asked Mi Ok Bruining, EPCAP coordinator, to give a brief report. She reported that after sending out 752 packets a few weeks ago, she has received 90 responses so far. Based on these 90 responses, 35 wanted information anywhere from 1 to 8 different topics. About 10 of them want trainings on specific areas of information. She has set up the database to put all responses together. A few examples for training are American with Disabilities Act affecting deaf and hard of hearing population, communication access resources, and hearing assistive technology. She will not provide training alone but she will work with individuals who are expertise in these topics to provide training. That will be next step.
9. Steve plans to attend the National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH)'s Biennial meeting in Atlanta, GA and plans to attend the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) conference following the NASADHH meeting from July 1st to July 6th.

SUB-COMMITTEES' REPORTS:

Ad Hoc Committee for FTE Staff Interpreter (Zellner-Chair, Sack, Gold, and Niedbala):

Travis Zellner, Chairperson of the Committee echoed as to what Steve Florio said about the budget that did not include the 4th FTE. Therefore, this committee is not done. They have to continue trying to find a way to achieve that goal. The committee will look into the legal avenue and identify the ramifications if the board of commissioners chose this avenue. The meeting will be set up right away hopefully next month. The board of commissioners discussed about the validity of data and information. Steve pointed out that each time the committee meet with the Budget office or Governor's office or House representatives, each of them asked for different data so there is no such a single source they typically use for analysis purpose. This committee will identify which approach that will be best for everyone. The latest request was to be asked how the mandates specifically were impacted.

Break – 7:07pm

Meeting Resumed at 7:18pm

COMMUNITY RESOURCES COMMITTEE (Gold-Chair, Riker, Niedbala, and Beach):

No meeting was held since the last time. Julia Gold will try to schedule a meeting in July 2014.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE (Abell-Chair, Sack, Murano, and Pila):

David Abell reported that the committee met on May 28th to review the existing priorities. He acknowledged that he is not going to be continuing as a commissioner or as a chair of the committee after the end of this month. He requested the Vice Chair to appoint a new chair of the Technology Committee and have this person to start scheduling its next meeting. David said he will remain a member of this committee going forward. As a private citizen and a non commissioner, he will continue working on the hearing loop database project.

He and Steve met with the staff that support the Board of Hearing Aids Fitters and Dealers earlier today and had a productive meeting. The meeting was to ensure that the RI General Laws, 5-49-3, is being adhered by the licensed hearing aids fitters and dealers. Joshua Pila had developed a draft letter that will be used to send to all licensed hearing aids fitters and dealers reminding them that they are responsible for including information on T-coils and benefits, RICDHH, and ATEL when they give the receipt to the consumers. The letter as the Department of Health agreed earlier today will be a joint letter from the Department of Health and the RI Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The intention of this action is to create as much awareness as they can.

- 2) David Abell representing the Technology Committee **made a motion** to authorize the RICDHH staff to send a letter to licensed audiologists, hearing aid fitters and dealers in the State of Rhode Island, either alone or in conjunction with other concerned state agencies and the ATEL program. Betsy Beach seconded. The motion was carried 8-0-0.

Vice Chair Heather Niedbala asked the board of commissioners if they have any items that they want to put on agenda for next month meeting on July 16th.

1. Deaf Awareness Month
2. Election of Officers

Vice Chair Niedbala adjourned the meeting at 7:44pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven A. Florio
Acting Secretary