

The RI CDHH Commissioner approved the minutes for the 03/18/2015 meeting on April 8, 2015.

## Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

March 18, 2015

### MEETING MINUTES

*Commissioners Attending:* Heather Niedbala, Betsy Beach, Todd Murano, Nico Sedivy, Timothy Riker, and Joseph Batiano

*Commissioner(s) not Attending:* Julia Gold, Travis Zellner, James Simon and George Herchenroether

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

*Public Attending:* Rosa Norberg, Hayley Baccaire and Heather Anderson

*Communication Accommodations:*

*Interpreters:* Carol Fay (MPA-358) and Christine West (MPA-358)

*CART service:* Jennifer Milette (Allied Reporters)

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

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Chairperson Heather Niedbala called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

**Review of Meeting Minutes (2/11/2015):**

- 1) Tim Riker **made a motion** to approve the January 14, 2015 meeting minutes as corrected. Joseph Batiano seconded. The motion was carried 5 Yes-(Beach, Murano, Sedivy, Riker, and Batiano), 0 No, and 1 Abstained (Heather Niedbala).

*Corrections:* Changed from, "Teacher Aide" to "Teaching Assistant", from "Developmentally" to "Developmental", from, "Creditibility" to "Credibility".

## RICDHH Officers' Reports:

Chairperson: No report  
Vice-Chairperson: Not presented  
Secretary: Not presented  
Treasurer: No report

## Executive Director's Report:

### 1. Governor's Budget Plan (Article 18 and 19):

#### Article 18 –

4 independent agencies (RICDHH, Governor's Commission on Disabilities, Office of Child Advocate, and Office of Mental Health Advocate) move/merge into a Division of Advocacy within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

Independent from any state agencies is eliminated from the statute. This means RICDHH will be no longer autonomy. No further information concerning the Article 18 is received from either Governor's Office or Budget's Office to date.

#### Article 19 –

25 non-prescribing professional licensure boards will be eliminated. A full time position will be created called, Administrator, who will be in charge of issuing license and taking actions on any violations. Also, a Health Professional Board of Review will be established with 10 members (4 professionals, 3 consumers, and 3 employed at Healthcare Industry) to oversee all appealed cases.

He walked over a brief history of proposed consolidations affecting RICDHH. He highlighted a number of challenges, time-consuming, and confusion during the process.

## Motions on Article 18:

- 1) Todd Murano **made a motion** to approve that Steve Florio set up various meetings with key people to discuss Article 18 in further details and have the members of the Board to participate. Timothy Riker seconded. The motion was carried, 6-0.
- 2) Timothy Riker **made a motion** to approve RICDHH's position, *"Until the Governor's Office and the Budget Office provide more information to the Board of Commissioners on the reasons for and consequences of article 18, the RIDCHH opposes the adoption of this measure. The Commission has established a committee to serve as the primary point of contact on this matter."* and to approve that an ad-hoc committee to be formed to monitor Article 18. Joseph Batiano seconded. The motion was carried 6-0

## Motions on Article 19:

- 1) Timothy Riker **made a motion** to approve that RICDHH will support whatever RI RID's position is on Article 19. Betsy Beach seconded. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Steve Florio introduced Rosa Norberg, RIRID President and she had a few words. She introduced two more RIRID officers, Heather Anderson, RIRID Vice President, and Hayley Baccaire, Secretary who were also presented. Rosa was pleased to know that the RICDHH supports RIRID on this Article 19. She noted that RIRID's position is to oppose Article 19.

## LEGISLATION UPDATES

1. Finally, the legislative bills have been introduced. The hearing dates have not been set for all of them yet.

**SB0478 and HB 5695** – Interpreter Licensure – 5-71  
**HB 5611** – Hearing Aids Mandated Insurance  
**HB 5696** – Contact List for 504 and IEP Plans  
**HB 5697** – ASL and English Language Assessment  
**HB 5685** – Wireless products added to ATEL program  
**HB 5014 and 5015** – RICDHH and Governor's Commission on DA proposed these bills to be merged and add Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

No meeting since the last time. The members of this committee are Julia Gold, Tim Riker, Betsy Beach, and Todd Murano. They will continue focusing on two issues.

- 1) Language Assessment bills
- 2) Early Intervention services

## TECH COMMITTEE

The Commissioners suggested to hold this until George Herchenroether is officially appointed. He might want to lead this committee. The members of this committee are George Herchenroether, Betsy Beach, Heather Niedbala, and Todd Murano.

## 4<sup>th</sup> FTE COMMITTEE

This committee will turn the attention to Article 18 of House Bill 5900. Julia Gold, Heather Niedbala, and Travis Zellner.

Mental Health Committee has not yet established but it will be considered at the next month meeting.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:**

1. Todd Murano announced that the Rhode Island School for the Deaf Boy Basketball Team won the Eastern Schools for the Deaf Athletic Association Division II championship. They have not won this since 2003. It was a huge accomplishment. He was proud of it.
2. Todd Murano announced that RISD will host the Regional Jr. NAD event on the weekend of April 10<sup>th</sup> to invite all students from New England to learn leadership tools and the presenters are invited to be part of this program. This will be its first time to do this. RICDHH will sponsor communication access accommodation if needed.
3. Timothy Riker announced that Brown University will host an event, "Audism Unveiled" and there will be a panel discussion. The panelists were Heather Niedbala, Thomas Darden, RISD Alumni, Paul Molloy, Kimberly Marthers, and Nico Sedivy. It will be live streaming of panel available for those who could not make it.
4. Steve Florio announced that the activities as part of the Hearing Loss Awareness Month are underway.
5. Hayley Baccaire pointed out that the professional licensures under the Department of Health are mostly related to health concerns and safety. She felt that interpreters should not fall under this category. It should fall under a different category like a job interview, events, social, etc. that have nothing to do with health concerns.

Chair Heather Niedbala declared to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven A. Florio  
Acting Secretary