

The RI CDHH Commissioner approved the minutes for the 08/26/2015 meeting on September 16, 2015.

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

August 26, 2015

### MEETING MINUTES

**Commissioners Attending:** Heather Niedbala, Betsy Beach, Todd Murano, James Simon, and Nico Sedivy.

**Commissioner(s) not Attending:** Timothy Riker, Joseph Batiano, and George Herchenroether.

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

**Public Attending:** Elsbeth Brown, Sandra Quattrochi, Caroline O'Brecht, and Elizabeth Shealy

**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 6:07pm. She determined that the quorum was met with 5 Commissioners in attendance.

**Review of Meeting Minutes (06/17/2015):**

- 1) Todd Murano **made a motion** to approve the June 17, 2015 meeting minutes as written. Betsy Beach seconded. The motion was carried, 5-0.

**Public Comments:** no public comment.

## RICDHH Officers' Reports:

Chairperson: Heather Niedbala announced that James Simon will not seek for another term and he has submitted his letter of resignation on July 23, 2015. He will remain on the Commission until the new replacement is officially appointed.

She asked that the interview for commissioners' seat moved up on the agenda and the commissioners were in agreement her suggestion.

## CANDIDATES FOR COMMISSIONERS' SEAT:

Chair Niedbala began the interview process. She introduced 4 candidates, Elsbeth Brown, Sandra Quattrochi, Caroline O'Brecht, and Elizabeth Shealy 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. These candidates were seeking to fill in two Hearing seats.

Niedbala asked all candidates if they had received a letter from the RICDHH about their rights to have the interview in closed or open session. They all said yes. All candidates wished to be interviewed in executive session rather than in open session.

Heather Niedbala **made a motion** to go into the executive session to discuss on questions for the candidates and to start interviewing with all candidates for the hearing seats. Nico Sedivy seconded. The motion was carried 5-0.

The Executive Session began at 6:45pm.

All candidates were asked to be interviewed for the Hearing seats.

The Executive Session was open after Todd Murano **made a motion** and seconded by Nico Sedivy at 8:00pm.

Break – 8:00pm

Resumed at 8:10pm.

Nico Sedivy **made a motion** that the board of the commissioners recommends Elizabeth Shealy and Caroline O'Brecht to be appointed by the Governor to serve on the Commission as the Hearing commissioners. Todd Murano seconded. The motion was carried with 5-0.

## COMMISSIONER TERMS:

Todd Murano **made a motion** that the board of the commissioners recommends Timothy Riker, Joseph Batiano, and Heather Niedbala to be re-appointed by the Governor to serve as the Deaf commissioners and Elizabeth Betsy to be re-appointed by the Governor to serve as the Hard of Hearing commissioner. Nico Sedivy seconded. The motion was carried with 4-0-1 (Heather abstained).

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

The Commissioners discussed about the process of election for the officer positions. They were in agreement that the Election of Officers will be held at the next meeting on September 16, 2015.

## RICDHH's Revised Budget Plan for FY 2016 and Budget Plan for FY2017 including RICDHH Strategy plan:

Steve Florio walked through the budget report with the Commissioners explaining that RICDHH is expected to submit 2 budget plans by September 15<sup>th</sup>:

1. A 7.5% budget cut plan for FY 2017 including potential impacts on RICDHH based on each percentage (2.5%, 5%, and 7.5%)
2. A level-funded budget plan includes 4<sup>th</sup> FTE.

Todd Murano **made a motion** that the RICDHH and EPCAP budget plans for FY2016 and FY2017 be approved with 3 RICDHH's regular line items (contracted services) reduced in FY2017 as part of 7.5% proposed cut. James Simon seconded. The motion was carried 5-0.

Todd Murano **made a motion** that the RICDHH Strategic Plan for FY2016 and FY2017 be approved. Betsy Beach seconded. The motion was carried 5-0.

Chair Heather Niedbala adjourned the meeting at 9:04pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven A. Florio  
Acting Secretary