

**PENDING APPROVAL BY EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
141<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Commission Meeting  
April 26th, 2014  
Bowling Green, Kentucky**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Amy Hatzel, Mr. David Beach, Ms. Becky Bush, Mr. John Horsley, Mr. David Bayersdorfer, Ms. Becky Crawford, Ms. Edie Ryan, Ms. Barbie Harris, Ms. Sharon White, Ms. Kelly Daniel, Ms. Jeannie Taylor, Ms. Liz Agro, and Ms. Michelle Niehaus

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ms. Holly O'Mary

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ms. Virginia Moore, Mr. Blake Noland, Ms. Jessica Endler, Mr. Tom Musgrave, Ms. Anita Dowd and Ms. Row Holloway

**COMMUNICATION FACILITATORS:** Ms. Rachel Morgan, Ms. Rachel Rodgers, and Ms. Laura Kogut

**VISITORS:** Ms. Rebecca Horsley, Mr. Ron Haynes, Ms. Jean Haynes, Ms. Crystal Beasley, Mr. Joshua Huffman, and Ms. Nancy Perry.

Ms. Amy Hatzel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:13 am. Ms. Sharon White, Secretary, called roll and welcomed everyone to the 141st Quarterly Commission Meeting. As a quorum was present, the meeting continued.

Board members reviewed the minutes from the 140<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting and typos were noted by Mr. David Bayersdorfer and will be corrected by Mr. Blake Noland.

**MS. KELLY DANIEL (Ms. Michelle Niehaus) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE 140<sup>TH</sup> QUARTERLY COMMISSION MEETING WITH CORRECTIONS. THE MOTION PASSED.**

**REPORTS**

**Executive Board:**

Ms. Hatzel gave a brief summary of the Executive Board meeting and how they discussed having members joining Commission meetings remotely through video conferencing or teleconferencing. According to the commissioner's handbook and KRS 61.826, there is provision made for the members to be able to participate in the meeting remotely. More details will be provided under New Business. The study groups were also discussed during the Executive Board meeting and reports reviewed. More details will be provided in the Agency Report. Executive Board members were also advised that information will be provided via email shortly regarding the Executive Director's annual evaluation. All points required to be reviewed will be covered in a survey to be completed by Commissioners.

**MS. BECKY CRAWFORD (Ms. Barbie Harris) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES. THE MOTION PASSED.**

**Agency:**

Ms. Virginia Moore welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if they enjoyed the Town Hall meeting the previous night, especially since we were welcomed by a large turnout from the Bowling Green

community and had a special guest from the Fire Department to speak to the community about 911 services. Members agreed it was a good Town Hall meeting and many issues, including advocacy were discussed.

Ms. Moore reviewed legislation that KCDHH has been pursuing during the 2014 General Assembly session that began in January.

- Senate Bill (SB) 32, calling for a hearing screening mandate for children in the K-12 educational system, was introduced by Senator Tom Buford. However, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) asked to pull the bill to start having meetings to discuss several of issues with deaf and hard of hearing education. The bill was pulled and didn't pass, although many consumers put in a lot of work to get the bill heard by the subcommittee. However, KDE has not responded to the meeting requests. Senator Buford will be contacted to see if we can get KDE to respond to their promise to meet on our concerns.
- House Bill (HB) 235, the budget bill that recently passed with amendments by both chambers, becomes effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. KCDHH fared well in that we did receive a small increase in funds and no budget cuts are anticipated. For the first time in five years state employees will receive a small salary increase, with the percentage based on the employee's current salary. An additional staff position was also requested in the budget request presented to the Cabinet last fall and should be approved, as long as agency funding supports it.
- All other bills drafted by the agency were not able to be introduced due to lack of support in the General Assembly. We will pursue other avenues to meet the goals each of the bills represented.

Ms. Moore discussed the new addition to the KCDHH website, The Coffee Chat, a vlog-based informal communication venue with different constituents on a variety of prominent current topics. Two have been added this quarter, one with Ms. Gerry Gordon-Brown telling her experience of marching on the Capitol with Martin Luther King, Jr. 50 years ago. The second was with Ms. Dana Parker honoring the memory, and acknowledging the accomplishments, of the late-former first KCDHH Executive Director, Mr. Bill Rogers. A third coffee chat is in the making, about a student in the mainstream school system and how she self-advocated for herself during Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings at her school and how it helped her get the accommodations she needed to succeed. Additional ideas for future Coffee Chats are welcomed.

The Executive Director continued her report by discussing advocacy requests the agency has recently processed regarding prisoners not receiving access to communication within the system, and how two lawsuits have been filed by deaf inmates in Kentucky. Representatives from KCDHH met with the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Corrections to discuss how to make Kentucky's correctional facilities fully accessible to inmates with a hearing loss. KCDHH will work closely with them to establish and strengthen accessible communication for all deaf and hard of hearing inmates.

The University of Kentucky contacted KCDHH about the possibility of setting up an Interpreting Training Program (ITP) in their Communications Disorders Department as they already have an American Sign Language (ASL) instructor on board. They wish to expand ASL classes within the Department and eventually expand to an ITP if interest continues. This is a wonderful opportunity to promote more ITP within the state of Kentucky.

The Kentucky Assistive Technology Service (KATS) Network invited the Executive Director to discuss the possibility of setting up a hearing aid bank in Kentucky, in partnership with several other state and

local entities. Other states methods are being researched and two meetings have been held to promote group discussions and interest in the project. Work continues and updates will be forthcoming.

The Big Brothers and Big Sisters (BB/BS) organization is very receptive about developing a program to mentor deaf and hard of hearing little brothers and sisters with appropriate deaf and hard of hearing role models. We are working on developing a list of potential mentors and other organizations to promote this project.

Ms. Moore updated members on inclusion of the iPad into the Telecommunication Access Program (TAP). We have received 428 applications for the new equipment in the month of April alone. The iPads are loaded with specialized apps to accommodate the communication needs of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Low Vision, and Speech Impaired applicants. Per our TAP regulations, wireless devices may only be provided to applicants 13 years or older. However, we are receiving numerous applications from younger individuals with speech impairments. Although we realize the great need these students have for this equipment we cannot provide it to applicant's under 13 years old, as it should be provided as part of the child's IEP through KDE. Suggestions were made that we provide these denied individuals with other options for services that might be available for them such as the Michelle P. Waiver program, the Deaf Blind program and possibly Medicaid. We will include this information in the denial letters.

Ms. Anita Dowd, Executive Staff Advisor, gave a synopsis of KDCHH's Strategic Plan for FY 2015-2016. Each goal and objective outlined in the plan was explained and the method of how each objective will be carried out was color coded. After much discussion, the Board felt they needed more time to review the Strategic Plan as drafted to be comfortable with the goals and methods before finalizing. Some members provided recommendations and additions to the goals for the agency's plan for the next two years. Members discussed and agreed to set May 31<sup>st</sup> as a deadline for submittal of any additions and amendments. The Strategic Plan was approved with the understanding that any recommendations would be included in the proposal, so that the FY 2015-2016 Strategic Plan will become effective July 1, 2014.

**MS. SHARON WHITE (Ms. Barbie Harris) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE STRATEGIC PLAN WITH INCLUSION OF ANY RECOMMENDATIONS PROVIDED BY BOARD MEMBERS BY MAY 31st. THE MOTION PASSED.**

**THE AGENCY REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ**

**Finance:**

Ms. Moore discussed the agency's overall finance report. The agency's allotment balance shows that the Telecommunication Access Program (TAP), after receiving all the applications for iPads recently will exhaust the fund before the fiscal year ends. The TAP staff will work according to policy to ensure that all applications receive equipment, including the landline devices, not only the new wireless devices. A waiting list is inevitable, and will be reviewed to ensure consumers are served equitably. Justification will be drafted to ask for an appropriation increase from the TAP funds held in an account by the Public Service Commission. We have funds stored there that were not swept by the Governor, as were the Telecommunications Relay Services funds (TRS), because we have justification of need for the specialized equipment and now have a waiting list of consumers that need to be served by the end of this fiscal year.

**THE FINANCE REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

**The K-12 Educational Study Group:**

Ms. Hatzel, Chair of the K-12 Educational Study Group, provided an update of the study group's progress. The staff liaison and Ms. Hatzel has been working together to start implementing the training moderm to the smaller core group by the First Steps providers. The staff liaison explained to the group about the trainings; it will be focused on several components such as Language Development, Education, Family and Medical. Basically the training will help the First Steps providers to make sure they understand how to identify the needs of a deaf or hard of hearing child. Regional staff from the Kentucky School for the Deaf is also being included in the training modules and will be utilized by First Steps as resources for the needs identified. The overall goals of this group are still overwhelming and need to be broken down into more attainable components that can be worked on by different subgroups that are aware of the needs within the other components and the resources to serve them. This is the only why the whole child will ever receive the education they are entitled to within the school system. As of now we have an agreement through email with KDE to pursue this avenue. Some discussion of billable verses non billable hours has ensued and hopefully will not block progress. Billable hours always involve more paperwork and red tape and hopefully the modules can be put in place as part of current practice between First Steps and KSD outreach consultants. Additional details regarding current goals for the study group are included in the written report provided.

**THE K-12 EDUCATIONAL STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

**The Nursing Home Study Group:**

Ms. Ryan, chair of the Nursing Home Study Group, gave a report. The correspondence with the state ombudsman representative for nursing homes has been lost because the representative we had established a relationship with, is no longer working there. We have attempted to reach the replacement, but phone calls are not being returned. However, the group is still working with the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to provide training and education to the organizations that work with senior citizens. The group wants to continue to train senior citizens to advocate for themselves and educated them regarding their own needs and technology available to improve their lives. Improvement on the enforcement of federal laws already in place is a main priority currently as we work to reestablish our ties with the OIG and Ombudsman's Office. One of the board members suggested that the Audiology program at University of Louisville might allow students to include hearing screenings at nursing homes as part of their practicum hours. This would at least get some of the needs identified so we can work with the individual consumers to advocate for them and push the facilities to provide needed accommodations. The study group will not continue officially during the upcoming FY but will continue to work on these goals.

**THE NURSING HOME STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

**Access to Videophones in Public Libraries Study Group:**

Ms. White, chair of the study group, provided a verbal summary of the study group's activities to date. Ms. White, a representative from Sorenson VRS, and the staff liaison met up with the Lexington Public Library's Central Library Manager to download the Sorenson software and made the Central Library Manager a point person to set up an account for public use. The first roadblock the group encountered was the library's Wi-Fi capability does not have enough bandwidth for clear transmission of videoconferencing calls. The best solution found was to use a computer and Ethernet cord to ensure the video quality to be effective for a videophone call. Once more libraries are "on line" and working correctly, Ms. White proposed to have a small open house or produce a V-log to spread the word out to the community. Periodic checkups need to be made by members of the study group to ensure the equipment and links continue to work ongoing. Next quarter, the final report of the group effort will be provided in writing for the archives. The group wishes to continue for the next FY to promote this project.

## **THE ACCESS TO VIDEOPHONES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

### **OPEN FORUM**

The Vice-Chair, Mr. Bayersdorfer, brought up a concern about the notification/alert for water advisory or natural disaster to the deaf and hard of hearing community, such as recently Louisville had a huge main water break-in that flooded the main intersection and was shut down for few days with boil water advisory. It is an ongoing issue that we are working on with emergency management, but they don't have the filters now to disseminate appropriate text message. For now we have to depend on the scrawls on TV and word of mouth (or text) from friends, relatives, neighbors and family.

Mr. Horsley acknowledged the notification problem and added that soon TV's would be outdated and we will all be totally dependent on texting to gain information, including emergency information. And this doesn't just mean the deaf and hard of hearing population, it includes mainstream individuals, so perhaps it will become more normal to be texted information as it becomes more mainstream and we will benefit from the changes in technology. He and Mr. Bayersdorfer also asked that we continue to pursue captioning in sports arenas and at sports events statewide. Ms. Moore suggested they request accommodations for any public event in advance and if it's not provided to pursue a lawsuit, or at least contact the Human Rights Commission, which seems to be the only way to get the attention of big business. This could also be a study group project for the next FY.

Ms. Hatzel threw in an idea of inviting students from deaf and mainstream schools to come and see the functions of the Commission board to get exposed on how things work in the meetings and see what we can do as leaders and role models to educate them on what it takes for a Board to function. It will give them an opportunity to meet the representatives and start networking in the future and learn the parliamentary procedures for running meetings and the backup work that is required to prepare for the meeting. They could come in a few at a time and work with KCDHH staff to learn how to be the next leaders of the Commission. Ms. Moore indicated this was a good idea and we would see what we can do to promote some of these students as interns. Ms. Niehaus mentioned that she is researching for AmeriCorps, VISTA will open one paid volunteer position starting in August. The next group starts in September.

Mr. Beach informed the board about the Access Development Summit in Bowling Green in July which will be focused specifically on addressing poverty among people with disabilities. The information will be sent in an email to Ms. Moore to spread the word for people to attend. Mr. Beach also informed about the Individual Development Account Program that has been set up to help people with disabilities with a dollar for dollar match savings program to assist individuals in purchasing a vehicle in rural areas. Independent Living Centers are partnering with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to promote these programs which are wonderful opportunities to encourage leadership in our youth and disadvantaged areas.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Moore briefly reviewed legislation again and indicated that the Senate Bill 32 is dead, but the concept of it is still alive. The meeting with Department of Education to discuss about the content of the bill is still pending and will be pursued.

The Town Hall meeting was successful with over 70 people in attendance with a special guest speaker, a Chief from the Bowling Green Fire Department speaking on 911 services and how they can be improved. Ms. Moore indicated that the issues with the hospitals will have to be confronted as well, as it is the most

mentioned issue in any town hall meeting. The Hospital Association will be contacted soon to bring the board back together to discuss how communication improvements can be made and accommodations granted on request, according to the individuals preferences.

The Board members reviewed several sample ideas for the format of business cards for the Commissioners. It was voted that the cards read 'Commission Board Member' on the front of the card with a list of all the organization represented by the board on the back of the card, along with each organizations website.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Ryan made a proposal to write a letter to the commissioners at the Kentucky Department of Education from the KCDHH board members concerning their agreement to work together after Senate Bill 32. **The motion passed.**

A proposal to suspend activities of the Nursing Home Study Group was made, with the understanding that the group would no longer meet officially, but that its members would continue to work in-house toward achieving its goals. **Motion passed.**

A proposal to continue the work of the Access to Videophones in Public Libraries Study Group was made with a few changes. Ms. White will continue as chair of this group. **Motion passed.**

Mr. Bayersdorfer also made a new study group proposal to pursue more standardization for Captioning in Public Venues, such as athletics stadiums and arenas. Mr. Horsley expressed interest in this group, saying there is a need for consistent accessibility in public venues across the state. Mr. Bayersdorfer and Mr. Horsley will co-chair the study group. **Motion passed**

Ms. Hatzel made a proposal to continue the K-12 Educational Study Group and work on goals one step at a time. **The motion passed.**

**Written proposals outlining the goals for the three study groups, a proposed budget, and outcomes for the year, and members of each group are to be presented at the July Commission meeting.** A staff liaison will be assigned to each group at that time.

Regarding the discussion about participation in Board meetings via videophone or teleconference, per the bylaws, procedures were reviewed and this is permitted and the Board member does have the ability to provide input and discussion during the meeting and vote on any matters before the Board. Live streaming of the meetings CART will be provided when available, for Commissioners only, to allow them to be aware of what is happening at the meeting. However, voting rights are not permitted. **The motion passed.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The next Executive Board meeting is scheduled for Friday June 13, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at KCDHH in Frankfort
- The 142nd Quarterly Commission meeting is scheduled for Friday July 25, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm in Frankfort at the Transportation Cabinet.

**MS. MICHELLE NIEHAUS (Ms. Liz Agro) MOVED TO ADJOURN.** The meeting was adjourned at 1:18 p.m.