

**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
144th Quarterly Commission Meeting  
January 23, 2015  
Frankfort, Kentucky**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Amy Hatzel, Ms. Kelly Daniel, Mr. John Horsley, Mr. David Bayersdorfer, Ms. Becky Crawford, Ms. Barbie Harris, Ms. Sharon White, Ms. Jeannie Taylor, Ms. Holly O'Mary, Ms. Michelle Haney, Ms. Michelle Niehaus and Ms. Edie Ryan

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. David Beach

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ms. Virginia Moore, Mr. Blake Noland and Ms. Rowena Holloway

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

**VISITORS:** Ms. Rebecca Horsley, Mr. Ron Haynes, Ms. Jean Haynes, Ms. LeeAnn O'Brien, Ms. Michelle Armstrong and Mr. Jay Jempson

Ms. Amy Hatzel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:13 p.m. Ms. Sharon White, Secretary, called roll and welcomed everyone to the 144<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Commission Meeting. As a quorum was present, the meeting continued.

Board members reviewed the minutes from the 143<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting and approved the revisions with some grammatical corrections that will be included in the final version.

**MS. TAYLOR (Ms. Ryan) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE 143<sup>rd</sup> QUARTERLY COMMISSION MEETING WITH CORRECTIONS. THE MOTION PASSED.**

## **REPORTS**

### **Executive Board:**

Ms. Hatzel opened the meeting by giving an overview of the Executive Board minutes as presented in the packet. Some highlights included that the Information Office Supervisor position is now vacant. Mr. Tom Musgrave accepted a position with the Kentucky Arts Council but will continue to work with KCDHH during DeaFestival.

Ms. Hatzel briefly discussed the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) updates, including explaining the pilot project which ended June 30<sup>th</sup>, the fact that the Public Service Commission (PSC) made an accounting correction that has impacted the program's budget and an ongoing waiting list for equipment due to budget constraints. To better explain these changes, Quick Response (QR) Codes have been added to all outgoing letters allowing

consumers to see an explanation in American Sign Language (ASL) and captioning on the KCDHH website. QR is a trademark for a matrix bar code used to direct someone electronically to a specific internet link.

The overall KCDHH budget is being monitored closely as the Cabinet as warned that there may be another budget cut before the end of the fiscal year.

The Education study group continues to work on improving the screening process for children with hearing loss, in hopes of seeing improved identification of students that need accommodations to excel. The Statewide Educational Resource Center on Deafness (SERCD) has been approved as a provider with First Steps through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and we will work to train other First Steps providers to work better with families of children identified with a hearing loss.

The Just Betty Project is in need of a nonprofit to take responsibility for coordinating the project with Cardinal. KCDHH cannot do this as a state agency, but is working to coordinate another non-profit that can take on this endeavor and keep it moving. We will stay in close contact with the project as it proceeds.

**MS. TAYLOR (Ms. Daniel) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD. THE MOTION PASSED.**

**Agency:**

Ms. Moore noted that this legislative session is short and explained the bills we are following and how staff reviews them daily to keep on top of things that may impact our community or the agency. Reviews are done as assigned and liaison meetings are held with Cabinet staff as required. We are following bills on changes to how administrative regulations are approved, AT&T service option revisions regarding analog and digital lines, and other general bills that impact all citizens.

Several interviews were conducted for the Information Coordinator for the deaf and hard of hearing vacancy. An internal promotion was selected and the Administrative Secretary II has taken this position. That vacancy is non-merit and interviews have been conducted to fill it but it must be approved by state Personnel before it can be announced. The agency cap was officially raised to 15 by after several months awaiting approval. However, due to reallocating some funds to ease the TAP waiting list and until the anticipated budget cuts are finalized, we will be evaluating how to fill this position. The Information Office Supervisor position is vacant and typically this position is hard to fill. Plans are in the works to construct a vlog for the KCDHH website instructing applicants on how to appropriately apply for state positions in an effort to reach a more diverse group of applicants and skill them on the steps of applying through the Personnel Cabinet, which can be challenging for someone unfamiliar with the Kentucky process.

KCDHH staff had a booth at the Kentucky Sheriff Association conference and discussed presenting at the next annual conference to reach out to this group. Staff also presented at Spalding University classes. From these exposures we formed connections and obtained ideas about how to better serve our constituents. KCDHH is focusing on how to better reach out to deaf and hard of hearing veterans in Kentucky and will partner with other entities to

meet the needs. We are pursuing a meeting with the Commissioner of Veteran's Affairs to improve our outreach to veterans returning from Iraq with a hearing loss.

KCDHH continues to work with the Kentucky Assistive Technology Services (KATS) Network and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) on the Statewide Hearing Aid Reuse Program (SHARP) to provide individuals with another means of accessing assistance to new or refurbished hearing aids. The program is getting off the ground and will be accepting applications by March. Updates will be provided as the project expands. We have also reached out to the OVR to ensure that hearing aids are provided to their consumers on a consistent basis.

Ms. Moore discussed the vlog done in partnership with the Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental & Intellectual Disabilities regarding recruitment of foster parents for deaf and hard of hearing youth. As a result, several families attended a meeting on January 12 and a network has been established in Central Kentucky and Jefferson County, should foster parenting be needed. Plans are to track children coming into the system through the Department of Community Based Services and then refer them through the process to ensure a seamless pairing. A mentorship component is being included to ensure that the deaf foster parents have resources to assist them. Everyone anticipates good things from this project and progress has been made.

As for the additional update with the Just Betty project, we may pursue a partnership with the Wisconsin based company, Cardinal, to lead the project with a core group in Kentucky acting as an advisory council until the non-profit feels confident in taking over. Additional meetings will be held before the next Commission meeting and updates will be provided.

Ms. Moore discussed the possibility of suspending future town hall meetings for the next year to conserve budgetary funds and members agreed this should be voted on and implemented immediately, along with a change of venue for Commission meetings.

KCDHH will continue to do as many outreach events as possible in partnership with other entities. We are analyzing the return of investment on each event to ensure that limited funds are spent in the most effective manner to reach out to consumers statewide.

## **THE AGENCY REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

### **Finance:**

Ms. Moore summarized the agency's financial report for this quarter. TAP funds are insufficient to fulfill the waiting list at this time. We have been told by the Public Service Commission that there has been an accounting error in the way that the surcharge funds are collected and distributed and they will get back to us on the impact this will have on TAP. KCDHH plans to request a one-time allotment increase to relieve the immediate need for TAP and then work with Cabinet budgetary staff to ensure that we are allowed to spend the full amount collected from the TAP portion of the surcharge, which should help make up the deficit if granted. General funds are being monitored closely and are being utilized effectively, but are very limited for this fiscal year.

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

## **Telecommunication Access Program (TAP) Update:**

The TAP department is currently serving consumers on a first-come first-serve basis, in order of approval date. With the addition of new equipment to the program we received an overwhelming amount of applications, both new and reapplicants. The pilot program for the distribution of this new equipment (iPads) ended on June 30<sup>th</sup>, the end of the fiscal year. After that date, the program applications were again reviewed and effective with July applicants anyone who had received equipment in the past four years was denied. Applicants who have never received equipment before are always served first and reapplicants that had not received equipment in the last four years are then served. This allows new applicants placed on the waiting list to receive equipment first when funds are available. This has caused some complaints from consumers. Letters have been sent out with a QR code on them that links the person to the website vlog which explains the policy in ASL. Hopefully the waiting list can be relieved soon and applicants will be able to receive equipment faster. Some individuals have been sent loaner equipment if we had it in-house, to use temporarily until they come up on the waiting list. Others have been directed to additional resources, such as the free CapTel IP phones, or are given contact information for our vendors should they chose to purchase equipment on their own.

The TAP Advisory Board met and meeting minutes are in the packet for review. The Board does have a vacancy and received several qualified applicants. The Chair will discuss this during new business. The overall number of equipment applications has slowed down, so we believe the rush is leveling off to a more manageable rate. TAP outreach will continue in partnership with other agencies and at other KCDHH outreach opportunities.

## **THE TAP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

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

Ms. Hatzel expanded on the previous explanation of this study group's goal to work with First Steps through an MOU to provide better services for children and their families, when a child has been identified to have a hearing loss. The study group is still exploring options for the curriculum, but "SKI-HI" is the method being discussed primarily. The group meets again on February 11 at the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD), to hopefully finalize the language in the MOU. The study group is also still actively pursuing improvement of the hearing screening form used by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). Statistical research from the American Academy of Pediatrics regarding the importance of early identification during preschool screenings is being collected and contacts are also being made with the Kentucky Pediatric associations and doctors' offices to obtain additional information for presentation to KDE. They are adamant that they will not implement any changes to the form that would cause an additional expense for parents. The study group continues to work to get the form changed.

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

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

Ms. White reported that the study group has successfully worked with libraries in Louisville, Lexington, Newport and Owensboro to set up videophones for use by the public. Study group members plan to attend a conference held in the spring for libraries statewide and present the idea in PowerPoint format to other library personnel that attend the conference.

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

### **Captioning in Sport Venues Study Group:**

Mr. Bayersdorfer had nothing to report at this time, but plans to make more headway during the next quarter as the group adjusts to a liaison change.

### **THE CAPTIONING IN SPORT VENUES STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

### **OPEN FORUM**

Ms. O'Mary shared that the Kentucky Association for the Deaf (KAD) and the Division for Behavioral Health are partnering to provide a Mental Health First Aid workshop to professionals that work with the deaf community on June 18-19 and on June 20 the workshop will be open to the deaf community as well. It will be presented in ASL only on these dates. If there is interest from other individuals in the community that need accommodations, other dates can be added. Registration is open and limited to 40 slots.

Ms. Moore noted that several other conferences are coming up such as: the HLAA (September), the National Black Deaf Association (NBDA) (August), the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) (March), the Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (KYRID) (March), the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Region III (August) and the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT) (October 2016). KCDHH plans to develop a "coffee chat" for our website, advertising each of these workshops/conferences and encouraging the community and public to attend.

Ms. Moore asked that HLAA consider including an iPad training workshop at their conference and perhaps NBDA do the same, to allow consumers with problems to have an opportunity to receive more instruction. Teltex has offered to attend and have a booth or do a workshop to assist consumers with utilizing their devices to the maximum potential. Teltex also has signed and captioned videos on their website to assist consumers with problems and use of their devices. Ms. O'Mary noted that several OVR clients have asked for help with understanding the iPad and that any live training would need to be presented in ASL.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Mr. Bayersdorfer asked if the letter to be sent to KDE is still tabled. Ms. Hatzel explained that it will be brought up on the next meeting agenda to discuss again as the hearing screening form is being pursued and the letter may no longer be necessary.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

The TAP Advisory Board has a vacancy for a hard of hearing individual to fill Ms. Betty Timon's remaining term. Several good applicants have expressed interest and the Executive Board reviewed those and recommends Mr. Jim Timon to fill the vacancy through 2017. A second position, for a hard of hearing/vision impaired individual is open due to lack of attendance by the individual in that position now. Discussion was held, and the board asked that additional recruits be sought to possibly obtain a person with a vision loss for that vacancy. It was agreed that nominations would be presented to TAP staff between now and the next Executive Board meeting on March 6. At that time the Executive Board will select from all applicants and make a recommendation to the full board in April.

**Ms. Ryan (Ms. Crawford) moved to accept the recommendation. The motion passed.**

Ms. Hatzel announced that the Executive Board reviewed all the applicant's for the Service Provider vacancy on the board and has put forth Mr. Bryan Bowen.

**Ms. White (Ms. Taylor) moved to accept the recommendation. The motion passed.**

As discussed earlier, town hall meetings are expensive and are not producing the turnout hoped for. The recommendation has been made to suspend these meetings for now to save funds for other outreach events. Partnerships will be forged with other entities to piggyback on events across the state to ensure consumers have access to KCDHH to express any concerns. Also, to save funds and centralize the location of Commission meetings a discussion was held to move future meetings to Frankfort.

**Ms. Harris (Ms. Taylor) moved to suspend Town Hall meetings and hold Commission meetings in Frankfort until further notice. The motion passed.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The next Executive Board meeting will be held Friday, March 6, 1:00pm -3:00pm pm at KCDHH in Frankfort
- The 145th Quarterly Commission meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 24, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm at Frankfort Transportation Cabinet
- The schedule of upcoming meetings will be updated and sent out to board members.

**MS. DANIEL (Ms. Crawford) MOVED TO ADJOURN.** The MOTION PASSED and the meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.