



**COLORADO COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Center for Independence
740 Gunnison Avenue
Grand Junction, CO 81501
September 3, 2015**

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Regular Meeting to order at 4:24 pm. The meeting started late start due to technical difficulties with the conference phone at the meeting site.

2. Roll Call

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Commissioners Kirk Neuroth (Chair), Mary Pat Graham-Kelly (Vice Chair), Amy Beckett (Secretary), Liz Konkol, and Lisa Weiss attended in person. Commissioners Lucas Marquardt and Leslie Ralphe attended remotely.

CCDHH STAFF PRESENT:

Cliff Moers, Administrator; Timothy Chevalier, Outreach and Consultative Services Manager; JoAnne Hirsch, Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Coordinator; Candice Alder, Outreach Consultant

INTERPRETERS/CART REPORTER:

Interpreters: Lynda Rimmel, Lariisa McClung, Sara Romes
CART Reporter: Claudette Mondragon

3. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda for the meeting was approved.

4. Approval of the Minutes

The June 4, 2015 minutes were approved, with one correction.

5. Reports

Commission Chair's Report, Chair Neuroth

Commissioner Neuroth opened by thanking the Center for Independence in Grand Junction for hosting the meeting and noted that it is great to see new faces and be in a different environment. He also thanked the Interpreters and the CART services. He noted that the room has a loop system in place for those people using a telecoil. The Commission wants to be a model for good communication access.

Commissioner Neuroth also notified the attendees that there is an opportunity for public comment. Community members are encouraged to sign up to make comments.

The Community Forum follows the business meeting. There are two sections to the forum. First Kris Smith-Shipleigh from Sprint will explain a new captioning service for meetings over the phone. Candice Alder will assist. Next, Mary Pat Graham-Kelly will present about the on-going Daylight Partnership.

Administrator Report (Administrator Moers)

Administrator Moers opened his report by showing a photo from the Commissioner Retreat in August at Evergreen. A lot of work was performed by the Commissioners at this day-long retreat.

Administrator Moers gave an update on the first annual report to governor and the state legislature that includes our recommendations. Due to the close time frame, the report was not filed by the due date of September 1. Mr. Moers' Supervisor at the Office of Community Access and Independence advised that he ask for an extension for filing. The reason for the extension request is due to the good discussion and points raised at the retreat for items to be included in the report. The request is to extend the time for filing the report to October 1, 2015. If the extension is not granted, the CCDHH Commission will need to wait until next fiscal year to file the report, as the General Assembly is strict with their schedules and deadlines. This is a new requirement for our Commission and for the Department where we are currently housed, and may be a consideration in our request for an extension.

Administrator Moers discussed the general format and information that will be included in the report. The first section of the report will be the data regarding the programs that CCDHH operates, such as hours of interpreting services provided, costs to provide the services, telephone equipment distributed, grant distributions, and projects and services and the outcomes.

The second section is a summary of planned fiscal year projects, including new projects such as the standardization for ASL instructors in higher education, investigating licensure for interpreters, and an indication on driver's licenses for identifying the type of communication accommodation needed.

The last section will be for the recommendations the Commission will be making to the general assembly. There are four planned recommendations from the retreat.

The first recommendation is related to the Seven Agreements from the Deaf Education Blueprint. The Commission agreed that we will recommend setting up a state Deaf Education steering committee to implement the Seven Agreements.

The second recommendation is for adding the Deaf-Blind services. The recommendation to the general assembly is to fund a 1.5 full time employee (FTE) to serve the Deaf-Blind community. In addition there will be a request for money to pay for Support Service Providers (SSPs) and to cover recruiting and training. The related mobility program request will be for about \$100,000-120,000.

The 1.0 FTE position will be for a Deaf-Blind Outreach Consultant. The .5 FTE will be responsible for orientation mobility program, as well as the SSP program. If the funds are approved, it will be an open competitive bid process within the community. The Commission will have to decide later if it will be an open bidding process or if it will be something that we handle internally.

The third recommendation is for the Communication Access Fund. The purpose of this fund is to provide communication access for deaf and hard of hearing people who receive legal services outside the judicial system. The Commission has worked to find funding for the project; now we will ask the legislature to provide or seek funding.

The fourth recommendation is for the Disabled Telephone User Fund (DTUF). This is funded through the Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS). The TRS also funds the reading program for individuals who are blind and funds the operations of the Commission. The funds are collected through a surcharge on land lines land lines, and funds cover these three of those programs in the amount of approximately \$250,000 per year. The TRS is receiving fewer dollars each year.

The Video Accessibility Act of 2010 is a federal law to create rules for the FCC to regulate. It includes charges for Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) that people pay a surcharge to the fund that provides for the national Deaf-Blind equipment distribution program at the federal level. The commission has not kept up with this act.

At the state level, the program is not required, but it can be a model for the Commission to employ in the future as a way of receiving surcharges from VOIP and from wireless lines. The Commission needs to start looking at this because, the TRS fund is currently .05 cents per land line. It used to be up to 0.30 cents per land line. At the same time, land lines are decreasing so the Commission wants to ask for additional funds per land line. The state is required by the federal government to provide communications and telecommunications equipment and relay services. This might be opportunity to push and ask that for surcharges in wireless and VOIP services, as well as additional surcharges per land line.

The amount of work that the Commission staff must perform is overwhelming. Administrator Moers displayed an organization chart. The Commission used to be under the division of Boards and Commissions as a sub-unit. Now we are located under the Office of Community Access and Independence as a Division.

Commissioner Moers discussed the staffing for the Commission. Legal auxiliary services now has 2.0 FTEs. Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program has 1.0 FTE handling the program for the entire state of Colorado, including the Deaf-Blind equipment distribution program. There are 2.3 FTEs for Outreach and Consultative services, specializing in deaf and hard of hearing services, with no one specializing in Deaf-Blind services.

The 0.3 FTE is vacant. It has been used for temporary positions as needed. The Commission needs this to be 0.7 FTE in order to hire a full-time Online Training and Video Producer.

Because the Department of Human Services has agreed to elevate the commission to a division level, we will have the opportunity to have an administrative assistant position created. The DHS tends to have an administrative assistant per division. The DHS can fill this position for the division; for the other requested FTEs, the Commission would have to seek legislative approval.

Therefore, the Commission needs to hire one more outreach consultant, an online training/video producer and an administrative assistant. That would be 2.7 FTE. Based on this analysis,

Administrator Moers is seeking possible funding avenues as recommendations to the General Assembly.

Administrator Moers asked the Commissioners to plan to advocate for these four recommendations as citizens. He is in contact with other groups willing to advocate and he can put the Commissioners in touch with these groups or organizations that are working to support those four different bills and endeavors. The advocacy can take the form of contacting your legislators by meeting face-to-face, writing letters and emails, and finding support from other people or organizations that can also advocate for the recommendations. Commissioner Neuroth suggested that the Commissioners contact Administrator Moers to let him know of their interests.

Committees:

Legal Auxiliary Services Advisory Council (LASAC) (Chair Pendley)

Administrator Moers gave the report. The Council will meet again on October 28. They will be discussing the Fee Schedule for payments to interpreters. The fee schedule starts at \$45 for interpreting for community needs, regardless of the experience of the interpreter. The Council is working to create centralized auxiliary services for the executive branch to serve the entire state. An item on the agenda for the meeting is to discuss a tiered fee schedule based on the experience of the interpreter.

Lariisa McClung has joined the LASAC as a new representative. The Council has one open position they are seeking to fill.

Commissioner Neuroth explained the function of LASAC to the Western Colorado attendees and noted that if anyone on the western slope has issues with the court providing sign language interpreters, the Legal Advisory Services is established to be able to provide both sign language interpreters in the state court system.

By-laws Committee (Commissioner Beckett)

Commissioner Beckett stated that a by-laws committee has been formed with Commissioners Graham-Kelly and Marquardt. This committee was formed to discuss one issue which we decided to table until a later time. Both Commissioners Graham-Kelly and Marquardt have agreed to remain on the by-laws committee, and Administrator Moers has been asked to join as an advisor.

The by-laws will need to be updated to reflect changes in the composition of the Commissioners, as well as any other changes that may be needed due to the Sunset report recommendations. We set the goal of having a meeting or meetings to review the by-laws and present the recommended changes to the Commissioners at the December meeting.

Nominations Committee (Commissioner Weiss)

We have four commissioners whose terms expire at the end of June. At the next meeting, we will start talking about which terms are expiring and what we plan to do about putting out information, specifically for the new Deaf-Blind Commissioner.

Grant Program Sub-committee (Administrator Moers)

Administrator Moers reported that two of the five members of the Grant Committee need to be replaced. For fiscal year 2016, the Committee received nine applications and approved six for a

total of about \$40,000. The evaluation process is very difficult and they are looking at ways to improve the process. The Committee recognizes that outcomes are the most important component. They are looking for outcomes that are clearly identified and achievable.

Deaf Education Liaison (Commissioner Weiss)

The Seven Agreements have been discussed as being included in the report to the General Assembly. There is nothing new to report.

Deaf-Blind Services Liaison (Commissioner Graham-Kelly)

Much of the report was covered during the discussion of the report to the General Assembly. Commissioner Graham-Kelly attended a task force meeting on August 25. She stated that the drafted legislative proposal is getting close to being completed. They are working at researching and providing more data regarding the Deaf-Blind community to help with the talking points.

Administrator Moers pointed out that he has enjoyed working with this group. They also need to have the opportunity to build a community of their own and have communication access. It is important that the Commission keep this group in mind as we make decisions.

Karen Park is providing SSP training on October 16.

6. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

7. New Business

Standards for Higher Education ASL Instruction

At the June 3 Commission Meeting, Karen Boyd gave a presentation expressing concerns with higher education ASL instruction and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE). She had asked for support from the CCDHH, but the group is not clear on the form that the support should take.

After much discussion, the Commissioners agreed that some type of action is warranted, and we decided the first course of action should be to reconnect with Karen Boyd to better understand the goals before we take any action. Therefore, this item will become old business at our next meeting.

In addition, this topic will not be included in the report to the General Assembly.

8. Announcements

Commissioner Neuroth announced that on September 19th, in Denver, there will be a Deaf-Blind chat event. Attendees will be able to see how protactile works in socialization and that will give an idea of how communication happens socially. The event will be a gelato shop, so we can eat some gelato, socialize and show our support in that community. Karen Park is organizing this event, and information is posted online.

9. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:45 pm.