



**COLORADO**  
Department of Human Services

**COLORADO COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
Goodwill Industries of Denver  
6850 Federal Blvd  
Denver, CO  
December 3, 2015**

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the Regular Meeting to order at 4:21 pm. The meeting started late start due to technical issues and people arriving late due to traffic conditions.

**2. Roll Call**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Commissioners Kirk Neuroth (Chair), Mary Pat Graham-Kelly (Vice Chair), Amy Becktell (Secretary), Liz Konkel, and Leslie Ralphe attended in person. Commissioner Lucas Marquardt attended remotely. Commissioner Lisa Weiss was unable to attend.

**CCDHH STAFF PRESENT:**

Cliff Moers, Administrator; Cheri Davis, Legal Auxiliary Services Manager; JoAnne Hirsch, Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Coordinator; Timothy Chevalier, Outreach and Consultative Services Manager; Candice Alder, Outreach Consultant; Mandy Turner, Legal Auxiliary Services Coordinator

**INTERPRETERS/CART REPORTER:**

Interpreters: Lynda Rimmel, Darlene Ensenat, and Tricia Franks  
CART Reporter: Trish Messinger

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda for the meeting was approved.

**4. Approval of the Minutes**

The September 3, 2015 minutes were approved.

**5. Reports**

**Commission Chair's Report, Chair Neuroth**

Commissioner Neuroth opened by thanking Goodwill for hosting the meeting. 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. He encouraged everyone to remember to speak into the microphone. He also thanked the CCDHH Staff for their amazing work and efforts.

Commissioner Neuroth discussed some of the negative things happening in our world, such as mass shootings and wars that create fears and concerns. He encouraged the attendees to put

these things aside for now and look at the positives in our lives, especially what the CCDHH is doing to affect people's lives. Their work is inspiring and amazing.

In August, the Commission had a Board Retreat that provided a rich opportunity for discussion about our strategic plan and vision, with many ideas and contributions. Commissioner Neuroth expressed appreciation to everyone who contributed to the positive success of the retreat.

Earlier this year the Commission made its first reports to the legislature that have been shared with the Governor's office, and he was glad this has been completed. The hope is that the legislative members will review the reports and learn of the work that is being done in our state, and will also see what more needs to be done. We hope to meet with them to work more collaboratively on these efforts. This is another positive experience.

The Deaf-Blind task force has been undergoing a great deal of work recently. Commissioner Graham-Kelly will speak more about that later in the meeting. This tremendous amount of work is also an inspiration to Commissioner Neuroth.

Another positive activity is the grant program. Recipients were recently selected and the Commission gave out \$42,000 to different organizations for their work in various aspects of their communities throughout the state.

The Commission can be proud of these proactive activities over the past three months and its focus on the positive rather than the negative things going on around us.

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

Commissioner Neuroth announced that the Community Forum follows the business meeting with two presentations. Ric Durity is sharing information about the upcoming ADARA Conference. Also presenting is Sarah Morris from the Civil Rights Education and Enforcement Center (CREEC). She will discuss what she is doing in her position regarding the provision of auxiliary services in medical settings for the deaf, describing what has happened in the past and what is being done to resolve these problems for the future.

#### **Administrator Report (Administrator Moers)**

Administrator Moers attended the Newborn Hearing Advisory Council in September. At this meeting they showed a video that he found to be inspiring and he showed the clip. It showed a bridge being made out of living trees to span a river. The trees did not need to be cut down and were very old. The message from the video included sustainability, a bridge for communication and access, seeing a community come together and handing down skills from one generation to another. Administrator Moers tied this video to the mission and vision for the CCDHH. We are making decisions that are sustainable and can set the stage for the future. Our focus should be on efforts and decisions over time, rather than taking a Band-Aid approach to single issues that arise.

In October, there was a Department of Health and Human Services (DHS) town hall meeting. The DHS staff were impressed by the turnout and input. This was the last of the state Town Hall

meetings and the CCDHH were told that this meeting was the most inspiring. Because of this experience, the DHS wants to work more closely with us. Information from the Town Hall has been added to the CCDHH Work Plan.

The CCDHH made five recommendations in its annual report to the Governor's Office and the General Assembly. These are all in the work plan. Administrator Moers gave an update on these five recommendations.

#### **Disabled User's Telephone Fund (DUTF)**

The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure that the funds are sustainable for the future. The Independence Center is intending to bring a bill forward to the State Legislature. The DHS is fully willing to stand behind the bill.

The funds for the DUTF come from a fee on land telephone lines. The funds pay for the Telephone Relay Service and Reading Services for the Blind. The recommendation is to add wireless and Voice Over IP (VOIP) to the support funding.

#### **Deaf Education Steering Committee**

We are asking that the state implement a statewide steering committee to implement changes in the deaf education system. The recommendation is to have a funded, staffed Steering Committee coordinator to ensure the state takes action on the Seven Agreements. We have not seen any action from the community to set up a bill to support this.

#### **Deaf-Blind Services**

The DHS is committed to these services and the Deaf-Blind Task Force is working to obtain funding. Commission Graham-Kelly will have a report on this later in the meeting.

#### **Additional Staffing**

The Commission is asking for 1.7 Full-Time Employees (FTE) to provide additional staff support, especially for the paperwork that is required. If the funds are not provided through the Deaf-Blind task force work, the Commission will ask for 4.2 FTE in the spring.

#### **Communication Access Fund**

The purpose of this fund is for private attorneys to access the dollars for providing communication access with clients. A deaf constituent of Rep. Joseph Salazar's district, who is an attorney and understands the rights of people through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), has approached him with the idea. Each legislator is allowed to introduce only five bills, but we are asking permission to add a sixth bill. If his legislative leader is approved for this, then it can begin the bill process.

These will be included in CCDHH's work plan if necessary.

The placement of the Commission is still under discussion (where the Commission will be placed in the state agency hierarchy). The ad hoc placement committee has been dissolved. The DHS misunderstood that when the ad hoc committee dissolved that our search for an ideal home for us was done and that is not the case.

The Department of Personnel and Administration, in collaboration with CCDHH, is preparing a survey for state agencies within the executive branch, as discussed at the retreat. The purpose of the survey is to learn if state employees are familiar with auxiliary services and if they have policies and funding in place to support deaf and hard of hearing consumers and employees. The plan is to keep the survey questions focused on auxiliary services rather than ask a wide variety of questions. The survey is still in draft form and when it is final it will be given to the Department of Personnel and Administration to help disseminate the survey to all 19 state departments and the 30,000 people who work for the state. The results should be ready in the spring of 2016 and will be presented at a future Commission meeting. The long-term goal is to learn how to improve statewide access to services for deaf and hard of hearing people interacting with state agencies.

The legislative statute for the Commission has some language issues that need to be clarified. The DHS has approved this work and the plan is to include the changes with the budget request. The changes will better define services of the CCDHH and the responsibilities for managing and implementing the services.

The CCDHH work plan will be presented to the Commissions at the March meeting.

Administrator Moers displayed the new logo for the Advocacy Coalition for Equality (ACE). ACE is a professional resource network serving deaf, hard of hearing, and Deaf-Blind Coloradans. ACE currently has ten members and will be adding two more. The Coalition meets quarterly to build networks, collaborate, and support other members.

In addition, Administrator Moers displayed the new CCDHH website currently under construction. It has been designed by Joyce Brubaker, who has relocated to Texas. The new website is well organized with lots of pictures and announcements. Chair Neuroth asked about maintenance of the website after the go live. Administrator Moers stated that Ms. Brubaker will train the staff so they can make updates and modifications to keep the website current.

Administrator Moers discussed the Daniels Foundation grant that the Independence Center received. The purpose of the grant is to develop communication access and information in a kit for the Red Cross within Colorado. It will be for an emergency preparation kit in the event of a national disaster of some sort when the Red Cross becomes involved, they will have a kit to help arrange communication services for deaf and hard of hearing people. The Independence Center is recommending that they hold \$10,000 of that grant in reserve. The Red Cross can contact the Commission for certified interpreters, certified deaf interpreters, and CART services so that during a national disaster those services can be provided and those funds will be available. This amount is likely not adequate, but it will help the Commission develop a relationship with the Red Cross and counties.

**Committees:**

**Legal Auxiliary Services Advisory Council (LASAC) (Chair Matthew Ruggles)**

Matthew Ruggles is the new Chair for the Legal Auxiliary Services Advisory Council. Lariisa McClung has joined the LASAC as a new representative. The Council has one open position for the interpreter representative they are seeking to fill.

The Council is in the rule making process focusing on creating more clarification in the rules, particularly in section 230 related to services provided.

The Council developed a fee schedule for contactors, both for interpreters and for CART providers. They looked at making them state employees, but the state has said they need to continue to be independent contractors.

The Council discussed the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) certification moratorium, meaning certifications have been put on hold. If this becomes a long-term situation, then they must decide what action may be needed. The interpreters would be involved in the discussion.

**By-laws Committee (Commissioner Beckett)**

Commissioner Beckett stated that the by-laws committee is composed of Commissioners Graham-Kelly and Marquardt, with Commissioner Neuroth and Administrator Moers.

Commissioner Beckett stated that the committee had met to review proposed updates to the by-laws. Most of the updates were related to the changes in the composition of the Commissioners. After the Commissioners reviewed the updates, the changes to the by-laws were approved. The updated by-laws will be posted on the internet.

**Nominations Committee (Commissioner Weiss)**

Administrator Moers gave the report. We have four commissioners whose terms expire at the end of June. The CCDHH Administrative office will be announcing the vacancies for these positions in January, including the position for the new Deaf-Blind Commissioner. People who are interested can apply with the governor's office.

The Nominations Committee is also responsible for nominating someone for the Susan Elliott award. It is time to make that award in recognition of individuals who truly have made a difference. We will add this as an agenda item for the next CCDHH meeting.

**Grant Program Sub-committee (Administrator Moers)**

Administrator Moers reported that grants in the amount of about \$42,000 were awarded for fiscal year 2017. He also reported that one of the Grant Committee members representing the deaf has been replaced. And in June, there will be another replacement due to the term expiring.

Chair Neuroth recommended that those who have been awarded grants come to the Commission meetings to give updates on their projects.

**Deaf Education Liaison (Commissioner Weiss)**

No report for this meeting.

**Deaf-Blind Services Liaison (Commissioner Graham-Kelly)**

The last Deaf-Blind Task Force meeting was in September. The group has been putting together the language they want to put into their bill. They have selected three key leaders for the task force: Carolyn Haas, Cindy Vaughn, and Heidi Vimmer. They have been meeting with members of the General Assembly and they also had a 30-minute presentation with the Joint Budget Committee (JBC), which was very well received. Megan Davisson is the JBC contact. Comments from the JBC included wanting to know why the initial request from the CCDHH did not include an

additional staff person. The JBC requested information about how other states provide these deaf-blind services. This information will be collected and submitted to Megan Davisson, then the JBC.

Administrator Moers noted that the DeafBlind task force requests funds for services through the JBC, rather than through the state legislature. The JBC can make decisions on as opposed to having to confront the entire legislature. If it isn't successful, then we could still approach the state legislature.

Chair Neuroth commented about the proposal for two additional CCDHH staff positions. One is for the support service providers (SSPs), program coordination, scheduling, and pay. The other is for orientation and mobility to help train DeafBlind people as they move out within the community and have access to public transportation and negotiate throughout the community. Administrator Moers stated that the task force asked for \$250,000 to support the services.

## **6. Unfinished Business**

State Standards for ASL Instruction:

At issue is ensuring there are a sufficient number of ASL instructors who are qualified to be teaching in the classroom. Administrator Moers stated that he had not had time to meet with Leilani Johnson, Director of University of Northern Colorado (UNC) DO-IT Center, and Greta Knigga, Director of UNC ASL Teaching Program. They have a role for the ASL instruction program at UNC. Administrator Moers needs to have this meeting to gather information to determine if a task force is needed.

## **7. New Business**

There was no new business.

## **8. Announcements**

On January 16, 2016 there will be a Support Service Provider (SSP) Training led by Heidi Zimmer in Denver at the provided by the Helen Keller National Center. Anyone interested in becoming a SSP can sign up. People can also be an SSP for hard of hearing blind persons who may not be proficient in ASL.

Chair Neuroth announced that there will be a "Kitchen Talk" in Colorado Springs, January 22, 400 – 7:00, and the Independence Center. The purpose of the talk is to discuss the Title Protection Law for people involved interpreting. It is a weak law and several people are looking at discussing how to make the law more effective, give further protections, and more strength to enforce certain issues and deal with complaints when there's inadequate interpreting being provided. A second meeting will be January 23 in Denver.

## **9. Adjournment**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:36 pm.