

Douglas A.
Ducey
Governor



Sherri L. Collins
Executive
Director

Minutes of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH), Board Meeting held May 20, 2021 at 4:30pm. Meeting was held remotely via teleconference and Zoom due to COVID-19.

Call to Order & Roll Call: Discussion/Action

Board Chair Jantz called the meeting to order at **4:38 PM**

Commissioners Present Via Zoom: PV Jantz, Sarah Benton, Jennifer Hensley, Missy Keast, Melanie O'Rourke, Catherine Sienko, Susan Webster, Fred Williams

Commissioners Absent: Barbara Brimhall, Judy Huch, Andrew Cohen

Staff Present via Zoom: Sherri Collins, Carmen Smith, Betty McEntire, Carlos Castillo, Emmett Hassen, Victoria Vaughn, Jeremy McCown, and Chyla Dalton-Nava

In attendance: Assistant Attorney General, Jo-Ann Handy

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Hensley moved to approve ACDHH Board Meeting Minutes from February 18th, 2021. Commissioner Sienko seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Committee Chair's Report/Summary of Events

Commissioner Jantz did not have a formal report, however he updated the Board on recent CDC COVID-19 recommendations, and informed the group that the future of Board meetings and public comments will be discussed in this meeting. He expressed his appreciation for the ACDHH Board and staff for supporting the Board virtually through the pandemic.

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100 N 15th Avenue □ Suite 104 □ Phoenix, AZ 85007
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Executive Director's Update

Sherri Collins reminded the Board of her Annual Evaluation, and explained that they will soon be receiving surveys to complete. She went on to update the board on the two recent additions to the staff; Chyla Dalton-Nava, Assistant to the Executive Director and Carlos Castillo, Business Manager.

There were two recent vaccination events ACDHH partnered with - Ability 360 and Phoenix Association of the Deaf. Both were very successful in providing accessibility via communication cards. Commissioner Benton added seeing them in the Flagstaff area.

Since February 2021, over 350 people from Healthcare, Public safety, and Arizona Employers have completed training sessions virtually. The Hearing Healthcare Program has partnered with ASU audiology department to provide hearing tests and hearing aids. The program will continue until June 2022.

A total of 207 SSP services have been safely provided since February, demonstrating the need even through the pandemic.

We have had a great deal of media exposure, everything from vaccines, to our agency, and also our employment campaign. We are also currently working on possibly creating an ASL hotline for COVID with 211. This will make vital information accessible to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. We will have an update at the August Board Meeting.

The "Let's Get to Work" Lunch and Learn Event for Arizona Employers will be held virtually on May 25th, several are registered for this event.

All State Agency directors recently received guidelines from the State of Arizona H.R. department on working from home or telework. The Executive Team Met recently to discuss how this will affect our Agency. We've decided to continue with the hybrid approach out of respect for the safety of our team. We are not completely out of the pandemic, and do not have the right to ask employees whether or not they are vaccinated. Our agency will need to take mandatory telework training provided by the State of Arizona by the end of June, and the new policy will go into effect on July 1st, 2021. We will be paying the lease for the office, but will have one year to decide if we will continue with hybrid work, and possibly reduce our office space, or fully return to the office.

Commissioner Jantz thanked Sherri Collins for the Report, and had questions on the Hearing Healthcare program, specifically, whether or not donations for hearing aids

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The mission of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing is to ensure, in partnership with the public and private sectors, accessibility for the deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, and persons with speech difficulties to improve their quality of life.

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would be accepted, and how to get that information out to the public. Carmen Green shared that individuals who wished to donate hearing aids will be referred to ASU, to complete a screening process. Contact information will be provided to the public by the agency. She also updated the Board on the Public Comment procedures for emergency rulemaking with Legal A and Provisional interpreter licensing. On April 30th, 2021, we began requesting written comments from the public, and will have a virtual oral comments session on June 2nd, 2021, to give interpreters an opportunity to have a voice. After those sessions are completed, we will prepare that information for the Governor's Regulatory Rule Committee, as well as our Policy Liaison in the Governor's office.

Legislative Update

Betty McEntire updated the Board on Legislative Action - We are currently waiting on State Budget bills to be officially released. The bills that may affect our community are possible changes to unemployment benefits, which could possibly increase the weekly per diem benefit. Senate Bill 1092, is the Commission's bill which added the definition of "DeafBlind" as well as providing the language that the Commission shall provide legislative recommendations to the legislature as it relates to language acquisition and assessments for infants, newborns, and children who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind. This bill was signed by the Governor three weeks ago. House Bill 2863, which will support ASDB becoming a local educational agency, is now on it's way to the Governor to be signed.

On a national level, we are monitoring the PRO Act, which is a federal bill that is related to interpreters. This bill would allow independent contractors to be classified as employees. We will continue to monitor the progress of this bill. Betty presented the ACDHH Five Year Strategic Plan, which will help the agency to set goals for the future. We will be conducting four community forums to get feedback on what the Commission does and where we can improve. We will also be conducting a Board survey to get your input on the Five year strategic plan. The Board took a break at 5:30.

The Board Meeting resumed at 5:47 PM.

Interpreter Complaints/ Inquiries

Emmett Hassen gave a summary of the first complaint/inquiry.

Ka'Borski Ledbetter disclosed on her initial application stating that she has worked

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one day without a license after her license lapsed January 16th, 2021.

Commissioner Jantz acknowledged Assistant Attorney General Jo Ann Handy and thanked her for joining. A discussion ensued. Commissioners Keast, Hensley, and Benton participated in the discussion.

Commissioner Benton moved that a fine of \$50 be applied to this individual, Commissioner Sienko Seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Emmett Hassen gave a summary of the second complaint/inquiry.

Sydney Rainey renewed her license and did not meet the required criteria to renew. She failed to meet at least 8 hours monthly teaming with either Arizona generalist or legal licensed interpreters.

A discussion ensued, Commissioners Keast, Jantz, Hensley, Williams, Sienko, and Benton participated. **Commissioner Benton moved that three additional hours of continuing education on codes of professional conduct, which will be a total of 15 hours be applied to this individual. Commissioner Webster seconds the motion. A discussion followed, with participation from Commissioners Keast, Benton, and Jantz. Motion is supported by Commissioners Jantz, Benton, Sienko, Webster, O'Rourke, Williams, and Hensley. Motion is opposed by Commissioner Keast. Motion passes.** Commissioner Jantz thanks Assistant Attorney General Jo-Ann Handy for her attendance.

Interpreter Licensure Committee Update

The ILC met in February and April of 2021, and reviewed and approved 43 applications. Of those, 37 were out of state VRI/VRS licenses. Emmett informed the Board of several interpreter preparation programs that will be finishing this month, and the hope that this will bring more in-state applications.

Remote/In-Person Board Meetings

Sherri Collins discussed the options for future board meetings, whether to continue meeting virtually, or in-person due to new CDC recommendations. Commissioners Keast, Hensley, Sienko, O'Rourke, and Webster participated in the discussion.

Commissioner Keast moves to have the next three meetings virtually, Commissioner Hensley seconded the motion. Commissioner Keast amended her

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motion to have the next two meetings virtually, and then decide after that whether or not to continue virtually, or in-person. Commissioners Sienko, Webster, and Williams opposed, Commissioners Keast, Jantz, Hensley, Benton, and O'Rourke were in favor. The motion passed.

Virtual Meeting Public Comment Guidelines

Sherri Collins informed the Board that ACDHH staff are working on a plan to include comments from the public at the next two virtual meetings. She explained that the new system will be ready by the next Board meeting in August. A discussion followed.

Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Hensley would like to add a discussion of Deaf Young Adults, and what ACDHH can do to support this population in the next meeting. Commissioner Keast would like to add an item about employment to the next meeting, but would like time to draft the subject. The next meeting will be held on August 19th, 2021.

Adjournment

Commissioner Sienko moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Benton seconded, motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:17 PM.

The undersigned certifies that a copy of the attached notice was duly posted this 25th day of May, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. by Chyla Dalton-Nava