

***COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA***

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# *Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing*

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**DRAFT**

# VDDHH ADVISORY BOARD

# MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 7, 2017 MEETING

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Debbie Pfeiffer**

**Carrie Humphrey**

**Traci Branch**

**Tim Patterson**

**Jason Zuccari**

**Roy Martin**

**Susanne B. Wilbur**

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

**Kathi Mestayer**

**Shantell Lewis**

**STAFF PRESENT**

**Ron Lanier**

**Eric Raff**

**Leslie Prince**

**Gary Talley**

**Christine Ruderson**

**INTERPRETERS**

**Darlene Hicks**

**Dinah Decker**

**CART**

**Rhonda Tuck – Cavalier Reporting**

# CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS:

The Quarterly meeting of the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) Advisory Board, called “the Board” was called to order by Dr. Debbie Pfeiffer at 10:00 a.m. All members, staff were welcomed and introduced themselves. A new member, Susanne B. Wilbur, was introduced by Ron Lanier. Members were asked to review the updated Board roster included in packets and report any needed changes or updates.

# ORDER OF BUSINESS:

**Review/Approve Agenda:**

There being no recommended corrections or changes; motion was made by Roy Martin, seconded by Carrie Humphrey and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as written.

**Review/Approve Draft Minutes 11/9/2016:**

Dr. Pfeiffer asked that (page 3, paragraph 1) “strategies for deaf and hard of hearing children” be changed to “deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired or deaf-blind children”. There being no further corrections or changes, motion was made by Carrie Humphrey and seconded by Roy Martin and unanimously approved to accept the minutes as written with one correction.

REPORTS:

Board Reports:

Carrie Humphrey: Last year (January – April) VRID piloted a program which streamed workshops on ethics, decision making, skill building, etc. across the state. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and the program is being repeated this year. VRID will hold an annual meeting June 23rd and 24th to include a plenary session on the 23rd, and all day workshops on the 24th with a business meeting at lunchtime that day.

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) provides a grant for training for interpreters who work in the K-12 schools. VRID and VDOE partner in this program.

Roy Martin: Mr. Martin, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Norfolk Public Libraries, noted that in May (Better Hearing Awareness Month) they will be presenting programs specifically to children and teens who have hearing loss, are blind or deaf-blind. At this time thirteen branches are participating. Mr. Martin will update VDDHH and the Board on progress.

Dr. Debbie Pfeiffer: Dr. Pfeiffer disseminated a draft document of VSDB outreach service activities for Spring including webinars (blind, deafblind and deaf), some that focus on the need for language development in children birth to five, live trainings (cerebral and cortical impairment) and family and student activities. The final document will be sent to VDDHH when completed.

Staff Reports:

Executive Office - Ron Lanier: Mr. Lanier highlighted some items on the Director’s Activity Report as follows:

1. As a result of the most recent meeting with the Medical Society of Virginia and the development of the Communication Access Fund, the MSV is setting up a training for physicians and medical professionals to become more aware of communication needs for the deaf and hard of hearing community.
2. VDDHH is moving forward with the project of installation of video phones in public libraries.
3. In November, Dr. Julia Strickland, invited by the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) presented on “Looping Virginia”. This initiative has been ongoing since 2014 and is growing; one of the most recent plans is for the General Assembly building.

Virginia Relay - Eric Raff:

1. In December 2017 the FCC announced recognition of real time text (RTT), a technology similar to instant messaging. As your message is typed, it goes immediately to the person receiving it. At this time, AT&T and Hamilton are offering the technology. AT&T has been invited to the upcoming Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC) meeting in April for a presentation on RTT.
2. The existing contract with Hamilton Relay for captioned phone services will expire at the end of March 2017. Mr. Raff and Clayton Bowen have been working with the Virginia Information Technology Authority (VITA) to put an additional one year extension in place. The goal is to synchronize the traditional relay services contract with the captioned telephone services contract so that they will expire at the same time and an RFP can be released that combines

both services.

Interpreter Programs - Leslie Hutcheson Prince:

1. VCU Health Systems now has a full time person who coordinates and provides interpreter services for MCV hospital. This has significantly reduced the number of “general” (as opposed to court) interpreter requests.
2. We continue to work with the Virginia Department of General Services (DGS) and the Virginia Department for the Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) on the interpreter contract and guidelines to provide seamless coordination both for state agencies and contracted interpreters.
3. Development of the new VQAS version materials continues and is now being “fined tuned” with launch predicted at the end of March or early April 2017. Also, new laptop computers are on order and will be used after set up for the VQAS Written Assessment. The old laptops have had major problems that it has been determined are not able to be resolved, so the tests have been administered recently on paper.
4. A current list of Interpreters who have indicated on their Directory Release Form a willingness to assist with communication access in an emergency situation are sent to the Department of Emergency Management on a quarterly basis. They, in turn, distribute the list to all local managers. During any emergency broadcast, a deaf interpreter (trained as a Certified Deaf Interpreter) is streamed live with tips and instructions on Periscope.

Technology Assistance Program – Christine Ruderson:

1. Ms. Ruderson has been working closely with Eric Raff on the launch of plans for the new structure of TAP and Outreach.
2. The VDDHH annual “TAP Focus Group” is scheduled for Saturday, April 29, 2017 from 9a.m. until approximately 12p.m here at VDDHH. The focus this year will be hearing aids and related technology. Dr. Shantell Lewis will be the primary presenter. Various vendors will have information on the latest technology. The event is open to the general public and to hearing aid professionals, physicians, TAP consumers and everyone who is interested. Notices will go out in early March.

Board members were encouraged to let Ms. Ruderson know any suggested information, equipment, concerns, etc. that they would like to see addressed at the event concerning hearing aids and related equipment.

Outreach and Community Services – Gary Talley:

1. Outreach and Community Services will be more focused on information and referral than it has been in recent years.
2. The primary focus now is the installation of video phones in public libraries. Three have been selected and installation should take place soon. Mr. Talley would like to make the southwest Virginia area a priority as there is a need there over most of the rest of the state.
3. The response to the video phone in public libraries has been very positive and, as part of the program, statistics will be kept on usage. All the libraries need to provide is the physical space to do it and internet service.

**2017 GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – LESLIE HUTCHESON PRINCE:**

There are three levels of legislative tracking done by VDDHH:

1. Tracking done if VDDHH is the lead agency on a bill,
2. Tracking done if a bill will have a direct impact on VDDHH and services provided but is not lead by VDDHH, i.e.; Lead-K which affects the code section related to the Virginia Department of Education,
3. Legislation that we do not actively track but we provide information because it may impact people in the community we serve, i.e.; a bill on service animals.

Today’s report focuses on Lead-K. There were two identical bills, one in the House and one in the Senate. This is normal procedure when a bill is brought forth through the Disability Commission. The goal is to have support from both houses so that it moves forward. However, one of the versions (House) has been tabled and the other (Senate) was stricken from the docket at the request of the patron. This means the bills are “dead” for this session by will probably be reintroduced at the next session.

A major concern was raised by parents who felt the bill was taking away parental choice. AG Bell said that ASL should not be included and that it should be language acquisition of English. Until the issues are resolved, the bill was withdrawn.

House bill 2419, which requires that any contracts entered into for call centers after 2019 would have to be located in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This bill has been tabled and has not gone forward

VDDHH has made every effort to provide sign language interpreters for meetings that are taking place on Lead-K. The Clerk’s Office in the House and the Senate were provided with interpreter request forms and instructions on how to process the requests. Once the bills were assigned to committee, interpreters were scheduled for every time that committee met. Knowing what committee a bill is going to, who the members of that committee are and which subcommittee it goes to are extremely helpful in being able to provide communication access for those meetings.

Ms. Prince is going to meet with Clerks of the House and Senate after this year’s session to formulate a written policy and procedure document for interpreter coordination for both committee meetings and individual meetings with members of the legislature. She encouraged Board members to let her know of any questions or concerns or input regarding communication in the General Assembly.

SPECIAL REPORTS:

Reintroduction of the Statewide Interagency Team (SIT) and its 8 Goals

The four agencies involved in SIT have programs specifically for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. SIT started in 2005 with a seminar on how resources could be pooled to address issues. In 2008 a needs assessment was done that provided a great deal of information.

Five major themes were identified:

1. Functioning in a hearing environment and culture
2. Communication access
3. Agency specific issues
4. Perception about how people who are deaf and hard of hearing are treated by the general population
5. Enhancing productivity and quality of life

Based on these, eight priorities were identified:

1. Expanding access to qualified interpreters, communication providers & CART services
2. Building the support service providers program
3. Ensuring emergency preparedness & training with police, EMTs & medical personnel
4. Boosting employer training
5. Enhancing advocacy & deaf self-advocacy training
6. Raising public awareness through training
7. Providing information, communication, & support groups for families & Children
8. Growing qualified staff to increase accessibility of services

SIT has been instrumental in the initiative to put video phones in public libraries and in establishing the Communications Access Fund.

Restructuring the Community Services and Technology Assistance Program – Eric Raff:

Mr. Raff and Ron Lanier, agency Director, have met with the Department of Planning Budget to discuss the proposed structure changes. A meeting is scheduled on February 16, 2017 with the Virginia Department of Taxation since the change includes the use of special funds to support the two programs, Technology Assistance Program and Outreach and Community Services.

The Board unanimously agreed at the November 2016 meeting to have VDDHH draft a letter to the Virginia Department of Taxation in support of these changes. The draft letter was discussed and some changes were recommended; however, approval to send the letter was unanimous.

Planning for Future Meetings – Agenda Suggestions:

1. Follow-up on status of the Communication Access Fund
2. Presentation at the May 2017 by Hamilton Relay on Real Time Text (RTT)
3. Follow-up on “Periscope” weather alert application
4. Follow-up on video phone installations in public libraries

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Board motion to adjourn was made by Carrie Humphrey, seconded by Tim Patterson and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.