****

**Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

**1602 Rolling Hills Drive, Suite 200, Henrico, VA 23229-5012**

**Advisory Board Meeting**

**May 2, 2018**

**Minutes**

| **Members Present:**  Traci D. Branch  Shantell D. Lewis, Au.D.  Timothy R. Patterson  Deborah L. Pfeiffer, Ed.D.  Susanne B. Wilbur, LCSW  Jason M. Zuccari  Carrie N. H. Humphrey, NIC  Kathi A. Mestayer  **Members Absent:**  Roy B. Martin, IV | **ASL Interpreters / CART Reporter:**  Kim Adderly, Cavalier Reporting  Catherine A. Clough  John A. Folker  Elaine Hernandez  **Members of the Public:**  Patti Harris, JSRCC student  Caitlin M. Oaks, JSRCC student  Jenny G. Witteborg, LEAD-K representative |
| --- | --- |

**Staff Present:**

J. Steven Burkarth, Program Specialist

Leslie G. Hutcheson, Interpreter Programs Manager

Eric H. Raff, Director

Christine C. Ruderson, Technology Assistance Program Manager

Gary W. Talley, Community Services Manager

# Agenda

1. **Working Breakfast: Networking**

At 9:30 a.m., the members of the Advisory Board of the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) convened in the conference room at the VDDHH Central Office, 1602 Rolling Hills Drive, Suite 200, Henrico, VA 23229-5012.

1. **Call to Order**

Chairwoman Traci D. Branch called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

1. The members of the Advisory Board introduced themselves, followed by staff, guests and members of the public.
2. No corrections or revisions were requested to the Advisory Board membership roster.
3. **Approval of the Agenda**

No corrections or revisions were requested to the meeting agenda. The motion to approve the agenda was made by Ms. Humphrey and seconded by Dr. Pfeiffer. The vote was unanimous.

1. **Approval of the Minutes from February 7, 2018**

No corrections or revisions were requested to the meeting minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Mestayer and seconded by Ms. Wilbur. The vote was unanimous.

1. **Board Member Reports**

Chairwoman Branch recognized the following members of the board:

Deborah L. Pfeiffer, Ed.D. provided a report, which covered the following topics:

* The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (VSDB) outreach events, which she discussed at the previous Advisory Board meeting, were well-attended and feedback was positive.
* Online courses are available through the Central Institute for the Deaf on a variety of relevant subjects, which can be applied toward teacher licensure.
* The VSDB and the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired are jointly hosting an event for families of children, who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or vision impaired at the Amazement Square children’s museum in Lynchburg, VA.
* She will be volunteering at the Remote Area Medical (RAM) clinic in Smyth County, VA from May 4-6, 2018.

Carrie N. H. Humphrey, NIC provided a report, which covered the following topics:

* She is now a fulltime educator at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College and a part-time ASL interpreter.
* The Virginia Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (VRID) 2018 conference will be held from June 22-24, 2018 in Virginia Beach, VA. Workshops will be offered on legal interpreting, educational interpreting, ethical decision making, building strong communities, becoming an ally for the Deaf community, ASL-to-English interpreting, creating a team of hearing interpreters and deaf interpreters, and ASL literature.

Shantell D. Lewis, Au.D. provided a report, which covered the following topics:

* Her office produced a survey regarding the need for emergency kits for deaf or hard of hearing individuals to communicate with first responders and health officials. The response has been overwhelming, and she hopes to distribute 100 free kits in the fall.
* The limitations of the Visor Alert Cards when dealing with law enforcement personnel during traffic stops.
* Citizens can voluntarily register their communication access needs with the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles to enhance communication with law enforcement officials during traffic stops.

Kathi A. Mestayer provided a report, which covered the following topics:

* She conducted a recent training before an audience of nurses on how to interact with people who have hearing loss in health care settings, especially hospitals.
* She will be meeting soon with an ASL instructor, who is interested in starting a ministry for the Deaf in Williamsburg, VA.

1. **Staff Reports**

Chairwoman Branch recognized the following members of the staff:

Director Eric H. Raff presented the director’s report, which covered the following topics:

* The importance of subscribing to the VDDHH legislative updates from the General Assembly of Virginia.
* The recent resignation of the VDDHH community services specialist and the agency’s plans to fill the position.
* The creation of a new fulltime business manager position and the agency’s plans to fill the position. As a result, the deputy director position will be eliminated.

Director Eric H. Raff presented a report on Virginia Relay, which covered the following topics:

* The Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC) held its spring meeting on April 12, 2018. There are currently three vacancies on the council: captioned telephone representative, video relay user representative, and wireless relay user representative.
* The next meeting of the VRAC will be held on Thursday, October 4, 2018.
* The VDDHH has been re-certified by the Federal Communications Commission as the telecommunication relay service administrator for the Commonwealth of Virginia through July 25, 2023. This process occurs every five years.

Interpreter Programs Manager Leslie G. Hutcheson presented a report on the Interpreter Services Program (ISP) and the Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS), which covered the following topics:

* Progress has been made on revising the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the VDDHH and the Supreme Court of Virginia regarding the use of ASL interpreters and computer assisted real-time translation (CART) in Virginia state courts.
* Fees charged by CART providers in Virginia have increased, as has competition for these services by private sector organizations.
* Requests for transcripts of court proceedings from CART providers, particularly in courts not of record, have increased. A CART transcript is not an official record of the proceeding and will not be provided to the client. However, clients can still make arrangements with the court to purchase an official record.
* The ISP is fulfilling communication access requests at a rate of 96 percent.
* The ISP contract is set to expire and will be replaced with an interpreter services agreement, which will entail the same basic terms and conditions. The new agreement is anticipated to be in force by July 1, 2018.
* Two rater trainings were held in April on the new VQAS test materials.
* Technical problems and delays resulting from the state government’s transition to Google for a variety of information applications, including email.

Community Services Manager Gary W. Talley presented a report on the Community Services Program, which covered the following topics:

* Regarding the text to 911 transition, on June 4, 2018, residents in the city of Richmond and the counties of Chesterfield and Henrico will be able to send a text message for emergency assistance.
* The VDDHH legislative training event scheduled for April 28, 2018 had to be canceled, as the trainer was ill. The event will be rescheduled.
* The Celebrate Communication event will be held this Saturday at the Springfield Mall in Fairfax, VA from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Technology Assistance Program Manager Christine C. Ruderson presented a report on the Technology Assistance Program (TAP), which covered the following topics:

* TAP statistics and program activities for the first quarter of 2018
* A new TAP specialist has been hired by our contractor, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Center, to distribute assistive equipment in the Staunton area.

At 11:09 a.m., the board recessed for 10 minutes.

1. **Unfinished Business: Update on Interpreter Licensure Workgroup**

Chairwoman Branch recognized Ms. Hutcheson, who explained that the interpreter licensure workgroup would be composed of representatives from the Virginia Association for the Deaf, the Virginia Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, one deaf consumer, one ASL interpreter, one member of the VDDHH Advisory Board, Mr. Raff, and herself. Four to five meetings will be scheduled between June and October of 2018. The group will research and examine the requirements imposed by states that license interpreters and the outcomes of such regulations. In addition, they will discuss ways to solicit input from stakeholders.

Ms. Hutcheson also informed the board that the General Assembly passed a law during the 2018 session that mandates a review of all regulations currently enforced by the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation and the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. The objective of the review is to reduce the volume of state government regulations, and this effort may impede any proposal to regulate and license ASL interpreters in Virginia.

1. **Public Comment**

Chairwoman Branch recognized the following members of the public:

Patti Harris addressed the board on her recent experience advocating for LEAD-K (Language Equality & Acquisition for Deaf Kids) at the General Assembly during the 2018 legislative session. While she commended the legislature for providing ASL interpreters and certified deaf interpreters during committee meetings, she was frustrated that many lawmakers were resistant to providing interpreters in order for their deaf constituents to meet with them privately. To correct this problem, she asked the VDDHH to allocate funding to pay for interpreting services at the General Assembly during future sessions.

Jenny G. Witteborg addressed the board and reiterated the difficulty that LEAD-K supporters encountered at the General Assembly when they requested ASL interpreters for individual meetings with legislators. Ms. Witteborg commented that the VDDHH website is not clear, as its content is primarily in English, and that ASL interpretation should be added. She then remarked that the VDDHH interpreter licensure workgroup should be open to everyone and that she would like to be appointed as a member. Ms. Witteborg asked that future ISP reports include the number of complaints filed against interpreters with the agency. Furthermore, she suggested that the VDDHH issue two position papers: the first to encourage the use of CART services at local government meetings for late-deafened individuals and the second to propose that interpreting agencies on contract with hospitals and other similar organizations be required to offer job assignments to other agencies or freelance interpreters in the event a local interpreter is not available.

1. **Working Lunch: Presentation and Review of the “2018 Directory of Services For People Who Are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind”**

Chairwoman Branch recognized Mr. Talley, who presented the “2018 Directory of Services For People Who Are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind.” Mr. Talley explained that the directory is a new publication from the VDDHH, and will serve as a compilation of information and resources for the agency’s consumers on a variety of important subjects. A discussion ensued among the staff and the board members about the contents, format, and accessibility of the publication.

1. **Strategic Planning**

Chairwoman Branch recognized Mr. Raff, who presented the revised strategic plan for the VDDHH, which is required of all state government agencies by the Virginia Department for Planning and Budget. A discussion ensued among Mr. Raff and the board members about the vision, mission, and objectives of the VDDHH, as outlined in the strategic plan.

Mr. Raff concluded his remarks by stating his long-term goals for the VDDHH: amend the Code of Virginia to revise outdated language in the sections pertaining to the agency; increase appropriations from the General Assembly; hire more staff; improve existing programs and services; create new programs and services; establish a statewide community center; lead the integration, synchronization, and coordination of the current fragmented delivery system; and enact federal legislation to provide matching funds for state agencies serving the deaf community.

1. **New Business / Future Meeting Agenda**

Chairwoman Branch recognized the following individuals:

Ms. Hutcheson reminded the members that the next Advisory Board meeting is scheduled on August 1, 2018. She noted that one of the planned agenda items is to discuss the official capacity of board members to provide advice and comment to members of the General Assembly on the programs, services, and operations of the VDDHH. Another agenda item concerns the provision of assistive smoke detectors and alarms to consumers. Ms. Hutcheson also mentioned that the agency traditionally hosts a joint meeting of the Advisory Board and the TAP specialists in November. She asked for the board members’ opinions on whether the agency should continue that practice.

Ms. Humphrey moved to postpone the question of whether to hold the proposed joint meeting until the August meeting, and to use that time to devise goals and a structure for such a meeting. Mr. Zuccari seconded the motion, which was agreed to without objection.

Ms. Humphey nominated Dr. Lewis and Ms. Wilbur to represent the Advisory Board on the interpreter licensure workgroup, and both members accepted the nomination. Ms. Mestayer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

The Chairwoman thanked Dr. Pfeiffer for her eight years of dedicated service as a member on the Advisory Board, for her leadership during her term as chairwoman, and for her many contributions to the VDDHH and its consumers.

1. **Adjournment**

At 2:19 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Zuccari and seconded by Mr. Patterson. The vote was unanimous.