# VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

**AUGUST 1, 2017**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Debbie Pfeiffer**

**Shantell Lewis**

**Carrie Humphrey**

**Traci Branch**

**Kathi Mestayer**

**Jason Zuccari**

**Susi Wilbur**

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

**Roy Martin**

**Tim Patterson**

**STAFF PRESENT**

**Ronald L. Lanier**

**Eric Raff**

**Leslie G. Hutcheson**

**Gary Talley**

**Christine Ruderson**

**Elaine S. Ziehl**

**INTERPRETERS**

**Bernadette Mayhall**

**Elaine Hernandez**

CART - **Rhonda Tuck – Cavalier Reporting**

**GUEST - Jasmine O’Leary-Smith - intern**

## **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

The Quarterly meeting of the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) Advisory Board, was called to order by Dr. Debbie Pfeiffer at 10 a.m. All members, staff and guests were welcomed and introduced themselves.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

**Review/Approve Agenda:**

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

**Review/Approve Draft Minutes May 2, 2017 Meeting:**

Ron Lanier requested that Page 3 – Agency Reports – Number 1, “question mark” be changed to January 19.

Page 5 – PRESENTATION BY HIMILTON be corrected to PRESENTATION BY HAMILTON

Leslie Hutcheson Prince requested that her name be listed as Prince. Her name change to Leslie Hutcheson was not finalized at the time of the May meeting.

Page 2 – last paragraph -Debbie Pfeiffer requested that Rita Hampton be corrected to Brita Hampton .

Page 1 – Interpreters Present - Carrie Humphrey requested that the last name of Haynes-McGee be added to Emily’s name.

There being no further recommended changes, motion was made by Carrie Humphrey, seconded by Kathi Mestayer and unanimously approved to accept the minutes as written with corrections.

REPORTS:

### Board Member Reports:

Carrie Humphrey – Mrs. Humphrey reported that the VRID mentorship task force has drafted a survey, open until August 7, and posted on Facebook seeking interest from Interpreters or deaf community members who can mentor.

The national RID conference in April was in Salt Lake City. There were two focuses; a skills development track and a leadership track. Overall feedback from the conference was positive and it was well attended.

Dr. Debbie Pfeiffer – Webinars will be presented on October 18 and November 1 on “Theory of Mind and Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing” by Tiffany Hutchins.

Webinars will be presented, date tba, on “Transition and Students with Deaf-Blindness” by Kristin Ingram (Perkins School for the Blind) and Elizabeth Speirs (DBVI) and “Unified English Braille and Technical Materials (as a follow-up to live training July 14-15) by Wendy Buckley and Kim Avila.

Short courses, tba, will be purchased for viewing as continuing education units and will be available to anyone in the state.

Events planned for students in all Virginia schools include October 14, 2017 at the Virginia Air and Space Museum “Exploring Space and Matter” (in collaboration with DBVI) and November 4, 2017 at Barter Theater “There are More Careers in Theater than Acting (in collaboration with DBVI). At a date and location to be announced in November there will be “Science Day with Jefferson Lab for students grades 4 – 8 who are deaf or hard of hearing, using any communication (in collaboration with Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility Education Services, instructor Brita Hampton).

Dr. Pfeiffer recently (July 19, 2017) presented at the “Shining Stars State Conference” for early childhood special educators and will attend the Virginia AER Conference February 21-23, 2018 for professionals in Virginia serving children and adults who are blind or visually impaired.

Dr. Shantell Lewis – Dr. Lewis has information that she researched and will share her findings on the Interpreter Licensure Board in the state of Nebraska later today.

Kathi Mestayer – In a personal experience, Ms. Mestayer noted that after chemotherapy her audiogram did not change but speech comprehension went down by 25%. She learned that during chemotherapy one of the components can damage inner hair cells across all frequencies.

### Staff Reports:

Ron Lanier- Director’s Report – In addition to the Director’s Activities Report included in member packets, Mr. Lanier announced that second interviews for the two vacant positions, TAP Specialist and Community Specialist, have been completed and decisions will be made probably within the week.

Also, the VDDHH 45th Anniversary Celebration will take place September 29 and 30, 2017. He noted that a great deal of interesting history on the founding and early years of the agency is being compiled and encouraged all members to attend the celebration.

As a result of his association with the Virginia Business Leadership Network (VBLN), and an emphasis to encourage businesses to hire persons with disabilities, the Federal Reserve Bank has expressed an interest in installing a loop system and will meet with VBLN soon.

The School of Performing Arts for the Richmond Community (SPARC) is actively recruiting deaf students to participate in their annual production in June at the Altria Theater. Mr. Lanier encouraged members to disseminate this information and it will be put on the Facebook page of VDDHH.

Eric Raff – Virginia Relay – Mr. Raff announced that the current Relay contract started this month, August 2017, and will be valid until July 31, 2020. The caption phone contract began in April 2017 and will be valid until March 31, 2021.

The FCC requires state relay programs to recertify every five years. Mr. Raff is working with Hamilton Relay to complete the application, due in October.

Participation is being encouraged in Virginia Relay Partners. Businesses are recruited to be trained on how to receive and handle relay calls by our Hamilton TRS Outreach Coordinator, which promotes relay services. Previously the website/data base was handled by Devaney, Inc. but it is being transferred to DARS (Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services). We are hoping to release the new website in September 2017.

Mr. Raff is researching a program called Direct Video. Most offices have PBX systems that can route voice telephone calls to appropriate staff. The Direct Video system is similar in concept, but works as a video based system. A nonprofit organization called Mitre has developed the free Direct Video software which can be downloaded and used as an in-house video based system. A central phone number would be used and that video phone call can be transferred to the appropriate staff. Mitre has been invited to give a presentation to the Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC) in November.

Mr. Raff was asked to follow up on a waiver created by the FCC that would allow the installation of captioned telephones in medical facilities that doesn’t require one single user assigned to that piece of equipment. This would eliminate the need for the certification process every time a patient, resident, etc. needs a captioned phone.

Leslie Hutcheson – Interpreter Services Program – New VQAS version assessment DVDs are complete except for the “warm up” or introduction DVDs. These should be coming from VAVS, the video production company, this week. Raters from each group (Hearing, Interactive, Deaf) have been trained but will be brought in for “restandardization” on select candidates who will be tested on the new version. Interpreters will receive valid Levels on these assessments.

The Interpreter Services Program contract will be replaced by an Interpreter Service Agreement and Manual for state and local government agencies. It basically has the same terms and conditions and will have verified, qualified interpreters; meaning the interpreters credentials will be verified by VDDHH to meet the current standards. Rates will be set so interpreters who join the agreement will have that negotiated for them. The agreement does not apply to classroom interpreting in either public schools or higher education. We expect the agreement to launch in January 2018 and to be reviewed annually.

Ms. Hutcheson is waiting for approval from the Supreme Court of Virginia on changes to the Memorandum of Understanding that provides guidance to sign language interpreters for interpreting in Virginia courts. One of the challenges has been the service cap, which is six hours. When an interpreter is requested for a jury trial, many times lasting eight to ten hours, the interpreter will only be paid for six hours. This has made it difficult to confirm interpreters for these types of assignments. In the interim, we have been requesting approval for over cap authorization which reimburses the interpreter for actual on-site time.

Approval has been received from the Office of the Attorney General to implement a rate increase for out of state interpreters taking the VQAS which will actually match the funds needed for the assessment process. This will be done in the next few months.

Ms. Hutcheson, Mr. Raff and Mr. Lanier met in July with Susan Clark Schaar, Clerk of the Senate, Rose Ramsey, Deputy Clerk of the Senate, and Special Assistant to Clerk of the House, Elizabeth Mancano regarding communication access during General Assembly sessions. It was recognized that clarification and education for staff on effective communication needs to happen. They have agreed to meet with a consumer group to discuss the challenges and seem eager to resolve them.

The existing General Assembly building will be rebuilt over the next four years. Mr. Lanier has stressed the advantages of installation of a built-in loop system. Before the 2018 session there will be training and written guidelines of best practices for requesting interpreter and/or CART services.

Gary Talley – Community Services – Mr. Talley noted the Community Services report in members’ folders. As has been discussed at previous meetings, Mr. Talley will become Community Services Manager and will be conducting workshops, training, and presentations along with the help of a Community Services Specialist. Former Outreach contractors will become TAP Specialists, under the management of Christine Ruderson.

Mr. Talley has reached out to the criminal justice academies throughout the state and has worked directly with two of them

Christine Ruderson – Technology Program – TAP statistics are included in the report given to members. Ms. Ruderson has been researching how to revise the raining programs and has spent a lot of time out in the field as a backup person.

She is spending time working closely with Mr. Raff developing plans for the transition of TAP and Community Services.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no one present for public comment.

PRESENTATION ON INTERPRETER LICENSURE – LESLIE HUTCHESON:

The guidelines for the evaluation of petition for licensure:

1. Risk for harm to the consumer
2. Is specialized skill and training required
3. Autonomist practice – are they part of a group or independent
4. Scope of the practice is distinguished from other licensed, certified or regulated professions
5. Economic impact to the public
6. Alternatives to regulation and less restricted regulation

There are three levels of regulation

1. Registration – an individual files name, location and possibly background information
2. Certification – a form of voluntary regulation known as title protection. No scope of practice is reserved to a particular group. Only those who meet certification standards may use the protected title.
3. Licensure – mandatory and most restrictive

Most states who have regulatory measures have had them in place since before the previous study was done in 2009. It appears that the momentum of licensure, certification or registration may have slowed down.

If the Board chooses to pursue petition for review of the profession, we have a year and a half to gather information needed. VDDHH is not allowed to approach the Board of Professional and Occupational Regulation; the petition must come from consumers or professionals in that field. VDDHH participated in the previous study as an expert on the subject matter of interpreters that had not been deal with before by the Board of Professional and Occupational Regulation.

The challenge in monitoring will be that it’s the responsibility of the community to file a complaint for it to be effective. The community will need to be educated in how to be aware of opportunities to file complaints with the licensure board.

An in depth discussion followed. Some points discussed:

1. A concern of VDDHH is that the Directory of Qualified Interpreters is “self-selected” by the interpreters as to their practice areas. Legal situations are coordinated with nationally certified interpreters only.
2. The standards for educational interpreters are sometimes not met because the interpreters are labeled “one-on-one communication aide”.
3. Even with registration, certification or licensure unless the consumer is educated in what the different certificates or Levels mean they will still not know what to look for when coordinating an interpreter.
4. Consumer response to opportunities for public comment during the last study was poor. There was discussion about the language that should be used when advertising the events and using ASL videos on the VDDHH website.
5. Proof of harm as a result of poor regulation must be well documented and more than anecdotal. Many times consumers do not know how to file a complaint about services and are hesitant to do so because they are not sure it will make a difference. Will licensure help resolve this problem?
6. The Board requested bringing this to the November meeting for discussion with Outreach. It was also suggested that the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) and the Virginia Association of the Deaf (VAD) be approached with the question of licensure. They may provide valuable input that would help the Board decide whether to go forward. Ron Lanier announced the next VAD meeting will be in October and it was suggested that we ask to be put on their agenda.
7. Mr. Talley suggested that the Statewide Interagency Team (SIT) do a follow-up of the needs assessment done in 2007 to include the licensure question.

VDDHH STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE 2018-2020 BIENNIUM – LESLIE HUTCHESON:

The main change in the 2014-2016 strategic plan will involve the Outreach/TAP Program reorganization. Because there will soon be a change in administration, we have not yet received guidance on what is expected in our plan development. We don’t know, yet, what the goals of the next administration will be. We do know that the new strategic plan is not to be an aspirational plan, meaning that whatever is in the plan must be within the agency’s current budget.

Kenny McCabe, the agency’s Budget Analyst with whom we work on strategic plan development, was unable to attend the meeting.

The agency wants the input and feedback on what the Board’s visions of our focus should be. It is also important to keep in mind what the agency’s mission is and what our Code authority is.

PLAN FOR FUTURE MEETING:

Agenda items for the November 15, 2017 meeting:

1. Review of Interpreter Licensure issue, including input from Outreach since this is a joint meeting.
2. Update on Strategic Plan

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Board, motion was made by Carrie Humphrey and seconded by Debbie Pfeiffer to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.