



**Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  
**1602 Rolling Hills Drive, Suite 203**  
**Henrico, VA 23229-5012**

**Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**  
**August 7, 2019**

**Members Present:**

Traci D. Branch  
Shantell D. Lewis, Au.D.  
Timothy R. Patterson  
Kathi A. Mestayer  
Colin H. Wells

**Members Absent:**

Carrie N. H. Humphrey, NIC  
Roy B. Martin, IV  
Susanne B. Wilbur, LCSW  
Jason M. Zuccari

**Staff Present:**

Eric H. Raff, Director  
David J. Bahar, Virginia Relay Manager  
Leslie G. Hutcheson, Interpreter Services Manager  
Rhonda S. Jeter, Business Manager  
Christine C. Ruderson, Technology Assistance Program Manager

**Staff Absent:**

Karen Brimm, Community Services Manager

**ASL Interpreters/CART Provider:**

Cat Clough  
Bernadette C. Mayhall  
Rhonda D. Tuck, Cavalier Reporting

1 **I. NETWORKING – COFFEE & REFRESHMENTS**

2 On Wednesday, August 7, 2019 at 9:30 a.m., the members of the Advisory Board of the Virginia  
3 Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) convened in the conference room at the  
4 VDDHH Central Office, 1602 Rolling Hills Drive, Suite 203, Henrico, VA 23229-5012.

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6 **II. CALL TO ORDER**

7 At 10:05 a.m., Chairperson Traci D. Branch called the meeting to order. All members and staff  
8 were welcomed and introduced themselves.

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10 Chairperson Branch announced that the board had four members present at the start of the  
11 meeting. A quorum was not established and the meeting proceeded for discussion purposes only  
12 without voting.

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14 Chairperson Branch reviewed communication rules to follow during the meeting. The Board  
15 reviewed the draft agenda. Director Raff recommended last two items (board reports and  
16 strategic plan review) be shortened in order to finish the meeting by 2 p.m., to allow for a  
17 member to leave early. An advisory board member then arrived, making the number present at  
18 five, and the meeting proceeded with a quorum.

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20 No corrections or revisions were requested to the meeting minutes from May 1, 2019. The  
21 motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Mr. Patterson, seconded by Mr. Wells  
22 and unanimously passed.

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24 Director Raff requested that members review the Advisory Board membership roster and check  
25 both contact information and terms for accuracy.

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### 27 **III. BUDGET PRESENTATION**

28 Victoria Baldwin, Budget and Policy Analyst with the Virginia Department of Planning and  
29 Budget, presented on the state's biennium budget development process and timelines.

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31 Rhonda Jeter, Business Manager, presented on the VDDHH budget, including funding sources  
32 and expenditures.

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34 The Board recessed from 11:02 to 11:17 a.m.

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### 36 **IV. PROGRAM REPORTS**

37 Executive report: Director Raff reported that the Statewide Interagency Team (SIT) will have a  
38 town hall meeting on August 10 in Abington, followed by October 19 in Martinsville and  
39 November 2 in Staunton. The purpose of the town hall meetings is to identify needs, issues and  
40 barriers for deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind individuals. SIT will develop a comprehensive  
41 report and set priorities.

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43 Director Raff introduced David Bahar, Virginia Relay Manager, and shared information about  
44 the Virginia Relay Council. The next meeting will be October 22 at the Department for Aging  
45 and Rehabilitative Services (Central Office) and all meetings are open to the public. Advisory  
46 Board members are welcome to attend.

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48 Community Services: Director Raff provided the Community Services report for Karen Brimm.  
49 VDDHH will collaborate with the I Can! Project with Partnership with People with Disabilities  
50 at Virginia Commonwealth University to produce a video in ASL translating the brochures about  
51 protective orders. Ms. Brimm has been working on emergency management, particularly about  
52 shelters with upcoming hurricane season, as well as the Support Service Providers workgroup.  
53 She has also been involved with Senate Bill 1741 about language acquisition of children who are  
54 deaf/hard of hearing, which was referred to the Joint Commission on Health, and has been  
55 serving as the representative/technical consultant of VDDHH.

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Virginia Relay: David Bahar presented the Virginia Relay report and briefed the Board on communications tax, relay volume, and the two-year cycles. For the end of the fiscal year (June 2019), the call volume for the Virginia Relay was 300,000 relay minutes. It is expected that call volumes will decrease as more people switch from analog lines to internet-based and wireless services. The FCC manages the internet-based protocol calls and has held preliminary discussions as to shifting some of the responsibilities to the states. VDDHH will be looking internally at updating our contracts for relay services, considering that the relay traffic is expected to decrease, and possibly working on an RFP in the year 2020 to 2021. As TTYs are currently not being manufactured, we are looking into other types of technology such as real-time text in order to continue to meet relay users needs.

Interpreter Services Program: Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS) is getting ready to standardize a new set of QAS testing materials. The program will be bringing together raters in September and providing training so that they all have the same foundation when reviewing a candidate's materials, which is important for the validity and reliability of the testing.

In the Interpreter Services Program, Ms. Hutcheson has worked with the DARS procurement manager to develop the new interpreter services agreement which will launch in October. Hopefully, the agreement will result in expanding the number of interpreters because it will cover city, county and state governments with standardized rates.

For the past 6 to 8 months, ISP has had interactions with the Supreme Court of Virginia. Ms. Hutcheson will present at a judicial conference in Williamsburg on August 28 about communication access in the courtrooms. It will be a 30 minute presentation with an array of topics to cover quickly. ISP is also looking at ways to improve the current Memorandum of Understanding with the courts which was put into place last August, particularly related to lodging and use of external private entities for interpreter coordination and remote video interpreting (VRI). She will also present at a conference in September for clerks of the courts.

(Recess)

Ms. Hutcheson reported on the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) which will study the need for licensure of sign language interpreters in the Commonwealth. DPOR and VDDHH have discussed how to reach out to the deaf community during the public comment process. DPOR has connected with Carlisa Gunter to provide the announcement of the public comment period in ASL. It will also allow the submission of video comments presented in ASL. At least four town halls are planned and VDDHH will share the dates as they become available. DPOR asked for information about the number of complaints about unqualified interpreters (e.g., how has the public been harmed by using an unqualified interpreter and how extensive was the harm) and statistics about deaf/hard of hearing individuals residing in Virginia. DPOR needs enough data to convince the General Assembly, one way or the other, and defend the recommendation to get a bill passed.

Technology Assistance Program: Ms. Ruderson, Technology Assistance Program Manager, reported on the Request for Proposal (RFP) for technology services and community services contracts went out on August 5. It was sent to 890 individuals and VDDHH hopes to receive a

103 high volume of bids. Ms. Ruderson and Brittany Howard have been tracking numbers in the  
104 ongoing reports from vendors as a part of contract compliance, and this will be carried over into  
105 the next contracts. The contract will officially begin in January of 2020.

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107 Dr. Carl Amos plans to retire from Danville Community College, where there was a TAP  
108 distribution site, which has been officially closed. The area is covered, however, because  
109 Margaret Bryant has been slowly absorbing those consumers.

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111 TAP has been working with the Department of Veterans Services and presented to the executive  
112 leadership team. TAP was invited to be an exhibitor at the statewide convention for veterans.

113 TAP is focusing their team on national and statewide organizations, as they already have  
114 databases and can get the word out fast and efficiently.

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116 TAP has been working with speech language pathologists (SLPs) to identify individuals who  
117 may benefit from artificial larynxes that are distributed by TAP. A workshop for SLPs is being  
118 planned for the fall featuring the East Coast representative from Griffin Labs, one of VDDHH's  
119 vendors. TAP participated in the Voters with Disabilities exhibition and had the opportunity to  
120 look into voting machine accessibility for individuals with hearing loss. TAP has also  
121 approached the new CEO of Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority. It is interested in  
122 bringing TAP and Relay services to the residents. Ms. Howard and Ms. Ruderson will attend the  
123 board meeting in September.

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#### 125 **V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

126 No public comment was offered.

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#### 128 **VI. WORKING LUNCH: BOARD/AGENCY COLLABORATION AND AGENCY REPORTS FEEDBACK**

129 This was held during the recess above.

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#### 131 **VII. BOARD REPORTS**

132 Ms. Mestayer shared that she has experience in providing training to nurses in clinical phases  
133 and is available to present at any time to promote awareness about hearing loss.

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#### 135 **VIII. STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW**

136 Director Raff reported that the entire strategic plan did not have to be updated this year. Some  
137 technical corrections and financial information needed to be updated and were very basic. The  
138 goals and priorities did not change. The real changes will come next year and he would like for  
139 the Advisory Board to be involved in the plan development process during the three meetings  
140 between now and the due date. Director Raff provided hand-outs with instructions and asked for  
141 feedback on VDDHH values, because values are currently not included in the plan.

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143 Feedback from the discussion included values such as: diversity, understanding the population  
144 that VDDHH serves and provide supports and the extra help needed, looking for new ways to  
145 engage people, communication education, mutual respect for communication modes, and  
146 listening.

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148 A question was raised if values were needed or already covered under the vision statement.

149 Clarification was made that the values are optional. The board will provide feedback and make

150 recommendations to the VDDHH staff but the agency is responsible for the actual submission.  
151 The Chairperson asked that VDDHH decide which areas to focus on during the next three  
152 Advisory Board meetings and allow the board members to read those sections prior to the  
153 meetings.  
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155 **IX. NEW BUSINESS AND FUTURE MEETING AGENDA**

156 The Chairperson asked for any particular interest areas to address at the board meetings or to  
157 invite presenters. Mr. Bahar offered to provide information about any area of the relay and  
158 emerging technology, including what other states are doing and captioning advances. Another  
159 area of interest are the blogs posted to Facebook by schools that are not captioned, and deaf/hard  
160 of hearing students may be missing the information. Another suggestion is to ask a staff member  
161 from DARS to present about its services available for the deaf/hard of hearing, or the  
162 Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired to present about deafblind services.  
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164 **X. ADJOURNMENT**

165 There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Ms. Mestayer,  
166 seconded by Mr. Wells, to adjourn the meeting at 1:54 p.m.  
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