

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
COMMISSION FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**



**Thursday, March 21, 2019**  
NMCDHH Conference Room  
505 Marquette Ave. NW, Suite 1550  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
3:00 p.m.

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Austin Welborn called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. and proceeded with roll call.

Present: Austin Welborn, Chair  
Joanne Corwin, NMSD Designee for Rosemary Gallegos  
Johnny Robertson  
Don Johnson

Absent: Concha Dunwell

Commissioner Josh Pando had not yet arrived.

Quorum was met.

Ten staff members from NMCDHH were present: Executive Director Nathan Gomme, Deborah Romero, Lisa Dignan, Lori Neubauer, Corina Gutiérrez, Louise Chavez-Rasgado, Roger Robb, Cheryl Padilla, Jason Siergey, and Andrea Ginn. Four interpreters were present, Andrea Ginn, Rachelle Clifford, Cameron Flores, and Dana Murrah. Six members of the community were in the audience.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**19.12**

Commissioner Johnny Robertson made a motion to approve the agenda.  
Commissioner Joanne Corwin seconded.  
Motion passed unanimously.

**III. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 13, 2018 MINUTES**

Chair Welborn asked if there were any changes to the minutes from December 13, 2018.

**19.13**

Commissioner Johnny Robertson made the motion to accept the minutes as written.  
Commissioner Don Johnson seconded.  
Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. REPORTS**

**a. Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Nathan Gomme reported that Hamilton could not come to present since the date of the board meeting changed. They will do their report on their services and the phone systems they provide at the June meeting.

Executive Director Gomme has been monitoring the changes in Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS) and Real Time Text (RTT). He wanted to give an in-depth report, but a report was just released, and he was in the process of reviewing everything. He was able to say that it does not seem to impact our budget. Some changes will happen to reduce fraud and waste in the IP CTS system. There will be more information after he has time to review it completely.

The 60-day Legislative Session just wrapped up and there were several bills and memorials that Executive Director Gomme had been monitoring. We also discussed the CDHH budget and concerns over our declining revenue. There was discussion on the changes from the Taxation and Revenue Department (TRD) and there is some action on that end. TRD will be meeting with Executive Director Gomme and CFO Deborah Romero and TRD is aware that this problem will need to be addressed. Because of the declining revenue, CDHH did ask for deficiency/supplemental funding in our request. Everything that was discussed at the legislative session is still waiting for the governor's signature, so we are on hold at this point.

Several bills were introduced this year that have at least some impact on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. House Bill 48 addresses the issue of audiologists and hearing aid providers counseling their consumers about telecoils and assistive listening devices. HB48 requires this counseling so that people are educated about how these listening technologies work. At the Commission, we want consumers to be aware of their telecoils and how assistive listening technologies and loop systems can improve their lives. There were very positive responses and the bill passed the house and senate with very little opposition.

Executive Director Gomme said that he also monitored House Bill 136 which was related to driver's registration. The bill was not focused specifically on the deaf community, but on non-traditional modes of communication and the barriers they present. The bill ended up stalling because this session was so busy with the amount of bills being introduced.

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Commissioner Josh Pando arrived at 3:10 p.m.

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House Bill 243 was an attempt to get funding for different types of educational approaches for the deaf and hard of hearing. There were concerns about this bill and how it was presented and the focus on oral education. The Commission is in no way opposed to oral education, however the concern with this bill was the limitation on modalities of communication that it might impose. That bill ended up being rolled over indefinitely. Executive Director Gomme hoped that in the future we will be able to have more collaborative discussion between the entities involved as well as more clarification on the different community needs.

Senate Bill 363 essentially was for a new apprentice position for speech and language pathologists and Executive Director Gomme felt it was a sensible request, but there was a great deal of difficulty clearly explaining the different roles within that field, so it was also tabled with no action taken.

Executive Director Gomme announced that CDHH's Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) is ending its contract term at the end of this fiscal year. Community Engagement Director, Lisa Dignan, has assumed the responsibility of the RFP procurement process and we will award the new contract before the end of the fiscal year.

CDHH's TEDP has been distributing iPads for a while now. If there is a problem, the customer has had to send it out to be assessed and repaired if possible. Recently the Commission has found a device that can be plugged into a person's iPad and communicate with the vendor to diagnose it remotely. This is a very positive step because it won't put the burden on our customers to mail it out to find the problem.

**b. Department Reports**

**i. Community Advocacy**

Community Advocacy Director, Corina Gutiérrez, had told the board previously that Community Advocacy Specialist, Chery Padilla, had become a trainer for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) along with Lisa McNiven from the Governor's Commission on Disability. The two of them have been developing a presentation for the New Mexico School for the Deaf (NMSD) and the Deaf Cultural Center (DCC). The dates have not yet been set.

Ms. Gutiérrez stated that Community Education Specialist, Roger Robb, has been providing training for the local Social Security Administration offices. One of the managers from the Social Security office in Rio Rancho developed a placard and Ms. Gutiérrez had it with her to show to the commissioners. They plan to have the placard at each window so that the client can indicate to the representative their means of accommodation. The placard provides different accommodation options, such as a certified signed language interpreter or video remote interpreting. However, many of our deaf consumers are not comfortable reading English and, although there are some pictures, it still may not be clear. Mr. Robb is working on developing a vlog that will explain these in ASL. When it is done, it will be sent to Nathan Gomme for review and then to the regional manager of Social Security for approval and distribution to all Social Security offices.

Ms. Gutiérrez said that an ongoing project is the work her department is doing with healthcare providers and gathering case stories. Mr. Robb will be scheduling a training with DaVita soon.

Sandra Williams, the Las Cruces Office Coordinator, has gone out in the southern part of the state to different agencies and organizations like senior centers, hospitals, and libraries to let them know what the Commission does and to discuss setting up public video phones. A new sheriff was elected in Las Cruces, Kim Stewart, and Ms. Williams met with her. Sheriff Stewart was very enthusiastic about meeting with Ms. Williams, and Ms. Williams will be providing sensitivity training for her staff.

Susana Santillan, Community Advocacy Specialist in Las Cruces and Cheryl Padilla, the Community Advocacy Specialist in Albuquerque, continue to be very busy with the Commission's outreach booths.

Ms. Gutiérrez asked Mr. Robb to come up and present on some of the projects he has been working on. Mr. Robb began with the two-year strategic plan with law enforcement. They are still working on the placards. There was a meeting with one of the officers who thought a pocket-sized placard would work best for the officers, since their cars are often cluttered, and it would be easier to find there. The placards for Deaf, hard of hearing, and oral deaf drivers to carry in their vehicles would be the regular size. The Albuquerque Police Department (APD) said they will absorb the cost of printing and distribution.

Mr. Robb was happy to report that there would be another Coffee with a Cop event. This time the plan is to be inclusive of the hearing loss community. Many of the hard of hearing community did not attend last time due to a conflict with the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) local meeting. The event will be in late summer or early fall.

Mr. Robb said he had met with the census bureau to see if we would be able to get numbers for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in New Mexico. Unfortunately, we were informed that it is too late to get a question added to the 2020 census. They did say that we can work with the American Community

Survey and we may be able to get a better number that represents the deaf, deaf-blind, deaf plus, and hard of hearing communities. Mr. Robb added that he will be partnering with them to create a vlog to inform the community about the importance of filling out the census.

Mr. Robb recently had a meeting with the Office of Equity and Inclusion. Mayor Tim Keller established this office as a new department of the City of Albuquerque. Mr. Robb stated that the partnership between the Commission and the Office of Equity and Inclusion is very important. The Deputy Director of that Office and the ADA Coordinator were both present at that meeting. They seem very willing to work with the Commission and how to advocate on certain issues, like equal housing opportunities and other issues that happen at the city level.

Bernalillo County will hold a mock election for the year 2020. Some members of the community who may have never voted and are not familiar with the process and what it looks like. This will be a hands-on experience at the election warehouse. Deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind people will go through the process and know what information is asked before they go vote. The date isn't set but will probably be August or September. Mr. Robb also reminded the board that he did a vlog on the voting procedure a while ago and can share that again on Facebook and please share that information.

Isotopes opening day is coming up. They will have an exhibition game playing against the Colorado Rockies. Mr. Robb said he would be meeting with the staff at Isotopes Park and will work with them on how deaf and hard of hearing people can order food at the concession stands. The menus are overhead and deaf and hard of hearing don't have the ability to point and communicate their order. We are encouraging them to put pictures of their menu items on the countertop to allow for easier ordering. There are many items on the menu that can be difficult to communicate, so the countertop menu would be a nice benefit. Mr. Robb said he will be working on making a vlog as well to talk about the rules and policies at Isotopes Park that will make the trip to the park more enjoyable for everyone.

## **ii. Community Engagement**

Lisa Dignan, Director of Community Engagement, announced that they had four mentor/mentee pairs participating in New Mexico Mentoring this session. They are half way through and doing everyone is doing great.

The Interpreter Licensure Board has not had any appointments to the board by the governor's office, therefore they don't have a quorum and cannot have meetings. However, there is a new Director of Boards and Commissions in the governor's office so Ms. Dignan will start working with the board administrator this week to get that started. She said she didn't know if people applied for the board under the Martinez administration and if those applications carry over to the Lujan Grisham administration or if they must reapply. She will be looking into this.

As Executive Director Gomme previously mentioned, Ms. Dignan will be running the RFP for the TED Program. The RFP was released about a week and a half ago, and proposals are due April 4<sup>th</sup>. Then the real work begins with the evaluation of proposals. If all goes well, there should be a contract in place by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Dignan announced that Richard Bailey has left our agency since his wife had an excellent job opportunity out of state. Mr. Bailey was previously in charge of RFPs and that is why Ms. Dignan will be running the current RFP for TEDP.

Ms. Dignan and Andrea Ginn, Communication Development Specialist, have been meeting with the New Mexico Film Office to collaborate with them on becoming accessible to deaf and hard of hearing individuals. With the film industry growing so rapidly here in New Mexico, it would be great to have an access point for deaf and hard of hearing to get into that industry.

Ms. Ginn is also working with the Department of Health to set up a program to grow more interpreters who are skilled in mental health interpreting. The Department of Health is completely on board with this and Ms. Ginn is doing a tremendous amount of work building up this partnership.

The interpreter apprentice program is continuing to evolve. Ms. Dignan and Ms. Ginn are often conversing about what can be done to make the program even better, so there are exciting changes taking place. There was one more apprentice who voluntarily exited the program, so there are four that are doing incredible work and two of them were in the audience.

Ms. Dignan, who also oversees Human Resources for CDHH, announced that State of New Mexico Inclement Weather Policy changed. State employees are now going to follow their local school districts instead of having a separate decision about closures and delays. They will follow their home school district as opposed to their work school district. For example, the employees who live in Rio Rancho often have more snow than downtown Albuquerque. Those employees will follow delays and closures established by the Rio Rancho school district rather than Albuquerque Public Schools. This should lead to increased safety for all staff.

Ms. Dignan along with CFO, Deborah Romero, and Executive Director Gomme had a meeting with the new director of the State Personnel Office (SPO), Pamela Coleman, and three other individuals from SPO. Ms. Dignan thought the meeting was very positive and hopes to get the four vacant positions filled soon.

Ms. Dignan was also pleased to report that our agency will not be consolidated into the consolidated human resources project. This is great news because there were concerns about how the deaf and hard of hearing staff were going to effectively access a human resources person through a call center model that knows nothing about deafness, language access, or video relay. This is a big relief for us who prefer to maintain HR services at the agency level.

Commissioner Josh Pando mentioned that he was part of a training collaborative through SPO called "Trainers Unite". Usually people with disabilities are not part of a trainers' group. Identifying training needs for everybody regardless of ability is important, so he wanted to encourage someone from the Commission to be a part of that. Ms. Dignan was aware of the group and knew the person running the group. She thanked Commissioner Pando for mentioning it.

Ms. Dignan mentioned that she would be working with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). They restarted their webinar program for all state employees, but once again, none of them are captioned. They have been open to working with Ms. Dignan in the past, and she hoped the second time around will be easier.

Ms. Dignan asked if there were questions and Commissioner Robertson asked if she would elaborate on the four vacant positions within the agency. She replied that she could give a brief overview, but they may need to reclassify those positions to where they are the best fit for what the Commission currently needs. One of those positions is an advocacy position. Luke Adams left that position last year and the advocates in Ms. Gutiérrez's department will be very grateful to have that position filled. Rich Bailey's position will need to be filled, but we are still figuring out the details of that position. Mr. Bailey did a lot of procurement, working with federal regulations and transition work. Losing Mr. Bailey was a big loss for the agency. Another position in Ms. Gutiérrez's department handled the equipment distribution program and some outreach as well. All those tasks have been absorbed by other people in the advocacy department. The fourth position is in Ms. Romero's Administrative Services Department, left vacant when Joyce Croker retired.

**iii. Administrative Services**

Deborah Romero, Director of Administrative Services and CFO, stated that there continues to be a decrease in revenue, however the good news is that the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA), and TRD are all going to sit down and discuss the revenue loss. She is also waiting for approval of House Bill 2, which appropriates our budget for FY20. Hopefully, if it's approved, we can fill all the vacancies.

Ms. Romero announced that CDHH is current on all financial operations. It is the time of year where we will start training for year end and preparing for the FY19 audit. CDHH's FY18 is closed and we have our auditor, Thad Porch, here to present our FY18 audit report with zero findings.

**c. Auditor's Report**

The auditor, Thad Porch from Porch and Associates, stated that their responsibility as auditors is to make sure that the financial statements are materially correct. They audit balances, internal controls, processes, and compliance with laws and regulations. Mr. Porch explained that there are three types of results from an audit: Unqualified or unmodified means they believe your balances and footnotes are correct and the internal controls are good. Second is a modified or qualified opinion which means there was an area that may not be quite right, but everything else was fine. The third result is an adverse opinion or disclaimer, which is an unfavorable result. Mr. Porch was happy to announce to our board that CDHH received unqualified/unmodified results, which is the best outcome.

Mr. Porch reviewed the actual report with the commissioners, which all had a copy of the report. After reviewing, he said the biggest challenge was the declining tax revenue. He was glad to hear in Ms. Romero's report that she is talking to DFA, LFC, and TRD to figure out what to do. He reported that the Commission had no findings this year, which means there were no violations of laws, no errors, and good financial reporting.

Commissioner Robertson complemented Deborah Romero and her department for doing such a wonderful job and that her hard work was appreciated. The commissioners applauded her work.

**V. ACTION ITEMS**

**a. Determine Date for AG Training**

Chair Welborn stated that the only action item was to determine a date for the Attorney General training. Executive Director Gomme reminded that the board that at the last meeting it was determined that the board would benefit from training on the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and the Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA) and other issues pertaining to Board Meetings. CDHH's legal counsel, Delilah Tenorio, was not available for this meeting, but she sent an alternate from the Attorney General's Office, Steven Vigil. Executive Director Gomme added that Ms. Tenorio did recommend we schedule the training after the beginning of the new fiscal year, so to coincide with the first meeting of FY20, the date would be September 19. Mr. Vigil was asked how long the training normally takes. He replied that he had not yet done a training himself, but from other people at the AG's Office, he understood it would last at least an hour.

Chair Welborn asked if it might be possible to have an abbreviated meeting in September to incorporate the training on the same day. After discussion it was suggested that the meeting start earlier in the day.

**19.14**

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to change the start time of the September 19<sup>th</sup> meeting to 1:00 p.m. to incorporate training from the Attorney General's Office. Commissioner Joanne Corwin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

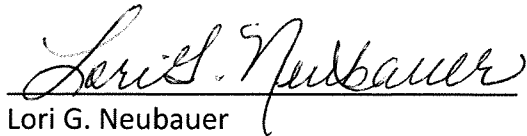
**19.15**

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Pando seconded.

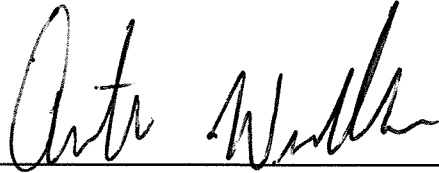
Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:11 p.m.



Lori G. Neubauer

Administrative Operations Specialist



Austin Welborn, Board Chair